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SELECTED WRITINGS  
OF  
LOUISE POUND

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1949



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TO  
*The memory of*  
JOHANNES HOOPS

PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH, UNIVERSITY OF HEIDELBERG, 1896-1949

REKTOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HEIDELBERG, 1920-21

ACTING REKTOR, 1945

PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF UNIVERSITIES, 1936

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OF ENGLAND, 1937

VISITING PROFESSOR IN AMERICA

*University of California at Berkeley, summers of 1926, 1930, 1937.*

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*University of California at Los Angeles, 1937-38.*

*University of Hawaii at Honolulu, summer of 1938.*

INTERNATIONALIST AND FRIEND OF AMERICAN STUDENTS



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by

Arthur G. Kennedy

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## FOREWORD

It is not easy to write both briefly and fittingly about the scholarly career of Louise Pound because of a number of considerations that complicate the task for one who is at the same time fellow Nebraskan, former student, fellow philologist, and friend of many years' standing. Other Nebraskans have written sentimentally of her long and devoted service as a member of the faculty of the University of Nebraska, and many of us who have come under her influence as a teacher and director of graduate studies might wax equally sentimental over the benefits that we have individually derived from her scholarly and helpful guidance. But as an introduction to a collection of some of her more important scholarly publications, such sentimental approach would not be at all fitting, since the purpose of this present volume is primarily, I am sure, to attempt recognition of scholarship, and leadership in scholarly thinking, in a number of fields of study and over a period of more than fifty years, in many parts of America and in contacts with a very great number of her fellow workers, philological and otherwise. Indeed, it must be insisted that a mere reprinting of some of her publications will fall far short of giving an adequate idea of the importance of her contribution to American study and teaching in English and American linguistics and literature, in folklore, and the like. For much of the contribution that she has made has been in the numerous

learned societies of America in which she has been an active member, not infrequently as director or officer, as the records well prove; or in the classrooms of various American universities to which she has been invited from year to year; or in the many individual scholars to whom she has given encouragement and helpful promotion of scholarly studies. It is only possible for one who has, as I have done over a period of nearly a half-century, observed and collected and recorded with a personal interest her day-by-day participations in the affairs of the American scholarly world—it is only possible for such a person to pronounce with assurance and conviction upon her scholarly and pedagogical career. As a student in her classes many years ago, I marveled at her learning and capacity for making learning a reality to others—and, I add, a lifelong pleasure—and today, as I attempt to appraise what she has done through the years since I first made her acquaintance, a respectful and somewhat awed student in her classes in English philology, I am still marveling and am, if the truth be told, even more awed at her capacity for accomplishment in a wide realm of scholarly life.

It was just forty-five years ago today that a little group of us, all graduate students, enrolled in her classes for Old English, for Middle English, and other philological subjects. Her courses moved along with a clarity and finish that gave to the earnest seeker after philological learning a real satisfaction. We did not realize in the fall of 1904 that Miss Pound—Doctor Louise Pound, I should say,—had only four years before been finally polished off by Doctor Johannes Hoops at Heidelberg and qualified to present such learning in the field of English as we were desirous of attaining. It was only after many years that I came to realize how young she was in years at that time, and how mature in her erudition.

A bibliography of the writings of Louise Pound will show a surprising range and multiplicity of publications, on Old English, Middle English, American literature and folklore, contemporary usage, Americanisms, etc. But many inferior scholars manage to attain to a very respectable showing as far as mere numbers go. It is, therefore, to the true quality of the research and production that one must look for a final and satisfactory estimate of the work of such a busy scholar as Louise Pound. At the time that I have referred to, nearly a half-century ago,

English philological scholarship was concerned for the most part with the study of Anglo-Saxon and Middle English, and earnest consideration of contemporary or recent American speech was eschewed by many English philologists as wasted on superficial and perhaps somewhat questionable linguistic material. It has required most of that fifty years to bring such study of the language of the present, with its literature and folklore, to a generally recognized status of respectability and sound scholarship. Much of the credit for such a development in the field of English philology belongs, I should say, to the leadership of Louise Pound. The same sound methods and careful scholarship have been applied by her to the modern materials that she earlier devoted to Early English. There is little difference, for example, in the scholarly quality of the little pamphlet of 1898 entitled "Strong Verbs and Preterite Present Verbs in Anglo-Saxon" and her recent study of "The Nebraska Legend of Weeping Water"; a few rare forms can be added to the former, but on the whole it is still a useful and dependable index to the materials listed, and in the case of the latter I must confess to my embarrassment that she has done more with the legend of my native town than I have ever done in all the years that I have known it. But her contribution through the years has been more than a mere assembling of little collections of useful and interesting facts; it has gradually recorded the newer aspects of language growth, and in the case of *American Speech* it has been leadership, courageous and of a very high scholarly order, to which a large number of other philological students have given their earnest and enthusiastic support. She has, to a very marked degree, contributed to the establishment of scholarship in the realm of contemporary, and more especially, American speech, folklore, literature, and culture in general. Not many decades ago the English philologist devoted his attention chiefly to Early English; today, he is willing to give equally serious attention to the language of his own day, and in a large measure, I repeat, Louise Pound has helped to make this possible. The shift in philological emphasis has been gradual, and not even yet recognized by some of the philologists who are working only in the life and literature of the Middle Ages; but in the record of



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English linguistic bibliography the shift stands out clearly and convincingly. We are much more interested in the language of today than we were when Louise Pound began to influence English philology.

ARTHUR G. KENNEDY

*Palo Alto, California.*

## EDITORIAL NOTE

The writings of Professor Pound have been mainly incidental. A major number were prepared by invitation for various scholarly programs, which accounts for their average length. The books by her or in which she had part were made by invitation also, and so was the present volume. Occasional essays or studies that may seem outdated now were pioneer at the time of their composition. Instances are her crusading efforts concerning poetic origins and the once widely accepted theory of the cooperative origin, among dancing peasant throngs, of ballads or narrative songs; or her pioneer examination, based on the phonetic transcriptions of scholars, of the divergences between British and American pronunciation, this before the leveling influences of the phonograph, radio and motion picture; or her pioneer interest in blends and trade name coinages; or her demonstration of the influence on his poetic style of Whitman's devotion to Italian opera and to singing; or her ideas concerning proper emphases for college courses in the history of English literature. The date of its composition is entered at the close of each paper. Many of her shorter pieces were prompted by her editorship of *American Speech* of which she was a senior founder. H. L. Mencken, always generous of awarding credit, has said of her many times, "Her early work and that of her students put the study of American English on its legs," and that "If it had not been for her pioneering my own

writing would have been impossible." In view of the multiple courses she offered to large classes as Professor of English at the University of Nebraska, which may explain the variety of her themes, and in view of her many personal interests, it is perhaps surprising that she engaged in so much writing as she did. Except for two semesters at the University of Heidelberg where she took her doctorate under Dr. Johannes Hoops, she taught steadily at the University of Nebraska for half a century, this without sabbaticals, grants-in-aid, subsidies for conventions, or leaves of absence except when she gave graduate courses in the summer sessions of leading universities. Her greatest pride, in any case, she says, has been in the published work coming from her students under her suggestion or stimulus. A number of books have been dedicated to her.

LOWRY C. WIMBERLY

*University of Nebraska.*

*SELECTED WRITINGS OF LOUISE POUND*



## LITERARY

### WHITMAN AND ITALIAN MUSIC

Whitman alone had the secret of his own kind of free verse, and no one since has caught it, though he has had many imitators. From what did it spring? His relationships to Blake and to Ossian, to oriental verse, to the mannered verse of Browning and to the mannered prose of Carlyle have all been examined; but the hypothesis of his great indebtedness to predecessors and contemporaries is usually, and rightly, discarded. Whitman was not a poet traditionalized by college culture. His thought and his technique sprang from attitudes of mind quite different from the customary. He was more than ordinarily self-made. He deliberately sought to free himself from older models and from accepted media of expression. He wished to break new ground and he broke it. Nevertheless, any source that may throw light upon his poetical development, or upon the shaping of his individual poetical style, deserves taking into account—especially since, in these days, many are convinced that he looms largest of our native poets.

One such influence deserves greater emphasis than has yet been given it, and it is not that of books. It has had but passing mention by Whitman's biographers, but to the reader of his own records its significance seems unmistakable. In it, I think, is to be found the key to some phases of his attitude toward poetry, and it accounts for

an interesting element in his curious polyglot diction. It has, on the whole, less to do with the content or the ideas of his verse than with his manner of expression and his general attitude toward his poetic utterance and his public. It is the influence of music.

Sculpture and painting had slight interest for him. They play little or no part in his verse, much as books play little part in it. But of music, though he was not himself a musician, he had strong appreciation. It stirred him as did no other æsthetic force. Literary historians and biographers have noted his fondness for the theatre and for the opera, for it could hardly escape readers of his *Specimen Days* and his other autobiographical notes; but with a passing remark or two on the probable effect of these agencies on his art, they have passed to the main tasks which preoccupied them. Yet the subject well merits specific treatment. Whitman was influenced uniquely and profoundly by Italian operatic music, and he relied upon importations from Italian musical nomenclature to an extent not to be paralleled in other poets. In his formative period in New York, supplied with the usual pressman's pass, he haunted the opera, and he carried his memories of Italian operatic scenes through the years. He also had operatic opportunities during his sojourn in New Orleans, in the period when *Leaves of Grass* was yet in incubation. It was in New Orleans that opera was first given in America; and it was presented four times a week in the months of Whitman's stay. It seems unlikely that he failed to attend. He heard all the good soloists, orchestras, and bands that came to New York in the decades of his residence there. Nor did his delight in music, vocal and instrumental, leave him as he grew older. He records in 1880 his unusual pleasure at hearing Beethoven's septette at a fine concert in an opera house in Philadelphia.

An early testimony to his love of opera appears toward the beginning of *Specimen Days*:

I heard, these years, well rendered, all the Italian and other operas in vogue, "Somnambula," "The Puritans," "Der Freischütz," "Huguenots," "Fille du Regiment," "Faust," "Etoile du Nord," "Poliute," and others. Verdi's "Ernani," "Rigoletto," and "Trovatore," with Donizetti's "Lucia" or "Favorita" or "Lucrezia," and Auber's "Massaniello," or Rossini's "William Tell" and "Gazza Ladra," were among my special enjoyments. I heard Albani every time she sang in New York and vicinity—also Grisi, the tenor Mario, and the baritone Badiali, the finest in the world.

This musical passion followed my theatrical one. . . . I yet recall the splendid seasons of the Havanna musical troupe under Maretzek—the fine

band, the cool sea breezes, the unsurpassed vocalism—Staffanone, Bosio, Truffi, Marini in "Marino Falieri," "Don Pasquale," or "Favorita." No better playing or singing ever in New York. It was here too I afterward heard Jenny Lind.

We learn of the effect on him of the singing of the tenor Bettini, in one of his "Letters from Paumanok":

Those fresh vigorous tones of Bettini!—I have often wished to know this man, for a minute, that I might tell him how much of the highest order of pleasure he has conferred upon me. His voice has often affected me to tears. Its clear, firm, wonderfully exalting notes, filling and expanding away; dwelling like a poised lark up in heaven; have made my very soul tremble.—Critics talk of others who are more perfectly artistical—yet, as the well-shaped marble is artistical. But the singing of this man has breathing blood within it; the living soul, of which the lower stage they call art, is but the shell and sham. . . .

After travelling through fifteen years' display in this city, of musical celebrities from Mrs. Austin up to Jenny Lind, from Ole Bull on to Conductor Benedict, with much fair enjoyment of the talent of all; none have thoroughly satisfied, overwhelmed me but this man. Never before did I realize what an indescribable volume of delight the recesses of the soul can bear from the sound of the honied perfection of the human voice. The *manly* voice it must be, too. The female organ, however curious and high, is but as the pleasant moonlight.

The Astor Opera House brought Bettini to New York in 1850, after Barnum had set an example by bringing Jenny Lind to Castle Garden. A few years later (1853), the contralto Marietta Alboni (1823–1894) of the great old school of Italian singing, then at the height of her career, was in New York; and Whitman heard her every night that she appeared—twenty times, perhaps. She made an extraordinary impression on him, stirring him as Jenny Lind never had. Her voice swept him off his feet, even more than did Bettini's. In several poems, such as "Proud Music of the Storm," he mentions her by name. "To a Certain Cantatrice" was probably addressed to her.

Later in life he wrote in "*Specimen Days*," July 4, 1880:

Such are the things, indeed, I lay away with my life's rare and blessed bits of hours, reminiscent, past . . . the elder Booth as Richard . . . or Alboni in the children's scene in "Norma."

In August 20 of the same year he writes:

Of a rare charm and simplicity—like the organ chant at midnight from the old Spanish convent in "Favorita"—one strain only, simple and monotonous and unornamented—but indescribably penetrating and grand and masterful.



A manuscript remains, written later than 1855, of a newspaper article entitled "A Visit to the Opera with Some Gossip About the Singers and Music." It contains sections on the "Orchestra" and on "Italian Music and Methods." Mention should be made also of the unmistakable testimony of Helen E. Price: "Alboni he considered the greatest of them all, both as regards voice and emotional and artistic power," and of Fanny Raymond Ritter, both cited by Whitman's friend, Dr. Bucke, in his biographical sketch of 1884. Whitman told her, said Mrs. Ritter, that

it would be strange indeed if there were no music at the heart of his poems, for more of these were actually inspired by music than he himself could remember. Moods awakened by music in the streets, the theater, and in private, had originated in poems apparently far removed from the scenes and feelings of the moment. But, above all, he said, while he was yet brooding over poems still to come, he was touched and inspired by the glorious, golden, soul-smiting voice of the greatest Italian contralto singer, Marietta Alboni. Her mellow, powerful, delicate tones, so heartfelt in their expression, so spontaneous in their utterance, had deeply penetrated his spirit, and never, as when subsequently writing of the mocking-bird or any other bird-song, on a fragrant, moonlit summer night, had he been able to free himself from the recollection of the deep emotion that had inspired and affected him while he listened to the singing of Marietta Alboni.

## II

By far the best evidence of the impression made by operatic music on Whitman is to be found in his verse itself. Several of his poems might well have been composed at the opera, as perhaps they were, for he is said to have written in the street, on the ferry boat, at the sea-side, and in the fields. A passage from his "Song of Myself" reads:

I hear the chorus, it is a grand opera,  
Ah, this is indeed music—this suits me.

A tenor large and fresh as the creation fills me,  
The orbic flex of his mouth is pouring and filling me full.

I hear the train'd soprano (what work with hers is this?)  
The orchestra whirls me wider than Uranus flies . . .

In "Yon Solemn-Sweet Pipes of the Organ" occur the lines "I heard the perfect Italian tenor singing at the opera, I hear the soprano in the midst of the quartette singing." His poem "A Dead Tenor" from "Sands at Seventy" is brief enough and interesting enough to be cited in full:

As down the stage again,  
 With Spanish hat and plumes, and gait inimitable,  
 Back from the fading lessons of the past, I'd call, I'd tell and own,  
 How much from thee! the revelation of the singing voice from thee!  
 So firm—so liquid—soft—again that tremulous manly timbre!  
 The perfect singing voice—deepest of all to me the lesson—trial and test  
 of all:

How through those strains distill'd—how the rapt ears, the soul of me  
 absorbing

*Fernando's* heart, *Manrico's* passionate call, *Ernani's*, sweet *Gennaro's*,  
 I fold thenceforth, or seek to fold, within my chants transmuting,  
 Freedom's and Love's and Faith's unloos'd cantabile,  
 (As perfume's, color's, sunlight's correlation:)  
 From these, for these, with these, a hurried line, dead tenor,  
 A wafted autumn leaf, dropt in the closing grave, the shovel'd earth,  
 A memory of thee.

"The Music Always Round Me" is another poem exhibiting a  
 passage unmistakably of operatic inspiration:

That music always round me, unceasing, unbeginning, yet long untaught  
 I did not hear,  
 But now the chorus I hear and am clated.  
 A tenor strong, ascending with power and health, with glad notes of day-  
 break I hear,  
 A soprano at intervals sailing buoyantly over the tops of immense waves,  
 A transparent bass shuddering lusciously under and through the universe,  
 The triumphant tutti, the funeral wailings with sweet flutes and violins,  
 all these I fill myself with.

During his Western tour he wrote "Italian Music in Dakota,"  
 after hearing "The Seventeenth—the finest Regimental Band I  
 ever heard":

Sounds, echoes, wandering strains, as really here at home,  
*Somnambula's* innocent love, trios with *Norma's* anguish,  
 And thy ecstatic chorus, *Poliuto*;  
 Ray'd in the limpid yellow slanting sundown,  
 Music, Italian music in Dakota.

Perhaps the best and fullest example of Whitman's poetical pre-  
 occupation with Italian music is to be found in "Proud Music in  
 the Storm." No array of passages testifying to the impression made  
 upon him by music, especially Italian operatic music, would be  
 complete without citation of it. Some selected passages are:

A festival song,  
 The duet of bride and bridegroom, a marriage-march  
 And with it every instrument in multitudes,

The players playing, all the world's musicians,  
 The solemn hymns and masses rousing adoration,  
 All passionate heart-chants, sorrowful appeals,  
 The measureless sweet vocalists of ages,  
 And for their solvent setting earth's own diapason,  
 Of woods and winds and mighty ocean waves,  
 A new composite orchestra,

Tutt! for earth and heaven;  
 (The Almighty leader now for once has signal'd with His wand.)  
 The tongues of violins, English warbles.  
 Chansons of France, Scotch tunes . . . and o'er the rest,  
 Italia's peerless compositions.

Across the stage with pallor on her face, yet lurid passion,  
 Stalks Norma brandishing the dagger in her hand.  
 I see poor crazed Lucia's eyes' unnatural gleam,  
 Her hair down her back falls loose and dishevel'd.

I see where Ernani walking the bridal garden,  
 Amid the scent of light-roses, radiant, holding his bride by the hand,  
 Hears the infernal call, the death-pledge of the horn.  
 I hear those odes, symphonies, operas,  
 I hear in "William Tell" the music of an arous'd and angry people,  
 I hear Meyerbeer's "Huguenots," the "Prophet," or "Robert,"  
 Gounod's "Faust," or Mozart's "Don Juan."

He refers in later lines to "mighty maestros, sweet singers of old lands, soprani, tenori, bassi!" and the "vocalism of sun-bright Italy."

Opera before Wagner, we need hardly be reminded, consisted mainly of bright melodies strung together with recitative and accompanied by not very complex orchestration. Operas were written chiefly to afford tenors and sopranos opportunities for arias. Whitman's friends sometimes tried to interest him in Wagner, he tells us, thinking that the new music should be fundamentally congenial to him. "But I was fed and bred under the Italian dispensation," he comments. "I absorbed it and probably show it."

### III

Passing to the subject of Whitman's diction, one is struck by his distinctive borrowings from the nomenclature of Italian music. No other poet ever ventured the experiment on the same scale. Except for *chiaroscuro* which he uses in *Specimen Days* and "the *ambulanza* slowly passing trailing its red drip" ("Song of Myself," 33) and "*Santa Spirita*, breather, life," in "Whispers of Heavenly Death," he uses no Italian words or phrases that are not drawn

from the terminology of music. There is often something violent or grotesque in his incorporations from the French, as when he exclaims of the prairie, "How plenteous, how spiritual, how *résumé!*" or when he addresses "Democracy" or "France" as *ma femme*. But his introduction of Italian terms usually seems less far-fetched and much more poetical. Here is a pretty complete array of illustrative lines:

. . . the baritone singer singing his sweet *romanza*, nor that of the men's chorus nor that of the women's chorus

—*A Song for Occupations*, 4.

Now list to my morning's *romanza*,  
So tell I my morning's *romanza*

—*Song of the Answerer*.

I hear *bravuras* of birds

—*Song of Myself*, 26.

Not you as some pale poetling seated at a desk lisping *cadenzas piano*

—*Eighteen Sixty-One*.

The *aria* sinking,

All else continuing, the stars shining,

—*Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking*.

I too with my soul and body,

We a curious *trio*, picking, wandering on our way,

—*O Pioneers*.

Fingers of the organist skipping *staccato* over the keys of the great organ

—*Song of the Broad-Axe*.

Bright has the day been, and my spirits an equal *sforzando*

—*Specimen Days*.

I fold thenceforth, or seek to fold, within my chants transmuting,

Freedom's and Love's and Faith's unloos'd *cantabile*.

—*The Dead Tenor*.

To flutes' clear notes and sounding harps' *cantabile*

—*Proud Music of the Storm*, 5.

See my *cantabile!* these and more are flashing to us from the procession

—*A Broadway Pageant*.

The musical term Whitman likes best and employs most frequently is *finalé*. He substitutes it, in many connections, for close, termination, end. It appears in the title of "Now Finalé to the Shore," composed in his old age, which takes its name from the first line.

Now *finalé* to the shore,

Now land and life *finalé* and farewell.

Other examples are:

The ever-tending, the *finalé* of visible forms

—*Starting from Paumanok*.

Do you suppose I could be content with all if I brought them their own  
*finale*?

—*Faces*, 2.

I sing the endless *finales* of things

—*Song at Sunset*.

A word I give to remain in your minds and memories

As base and *finale* too for all metaphysics

—*The Base of All Metaphysics*.

The expression "toward my thought's *finale*" occurs in "Democratic Vistas." Later in this work he employs a phrase having musical currency when he writes "both with Science and *con amore*"; and his "No dainty *dolce affetuoso*" in "Starting from Paumanok" is also derived from musical nomenclature.

In many poems, as in passages from "Proud Music of the Storm" he introduces Italian terms associated with vocal and orchestral music:

*Tutti*, for earth and heaven;

(The Almighty leader now for once has signal'd with His wand.) . . .

Composers! mighty *maestros*!

And you, sweet singers of old lands, *soprani*, *tenori*, *bassi*!

To you a new bard, caroling in the West,

Obeisant sends his love.

His association of himself, in this passage, with singers has significance. This is recurrent with him, while he rarely or never associates his poetry with the books put forth by others. His fondness for the term *recitative* in connection with his own poetry will be touched upon later.

I hear of the Italian boat-sculler the musical *recitative* of old poems

—*Salut au Monde*, 3.

Another musical term of which he is fond is *clef*, a term French in origin but deserving inclusion in a record of the technical nomenclature of music appearing in his poetry. In "On the Beach at Night Alone," he remarks, "As I watch the bright stars, I think a thought of the *clef* of the Universes and of the future." "The Clef Poem" in *Leaves of Grass* was intended to "strike the keynote not only for his poems but for the universe itself." Illustrations are found in many of the passages already cited of his references to choruses, quartettes, duets, marches, and timbre, and to the various instruments of the orchestra. In "A Song of Myself" occurs the Italian acclamation:

*Vivas* to those who have failed

In "By Blue Ontario's Shore" he has:

*Bravas* to all impulses sending sane children to the next age,

and in "A Thought of Columbus," yet again deriving his terms from his experience at the opera, he writes—

If thou still hearest, hear me,

Voicing as now—lands, arts, *bravas* to thee. . . .

Soul *plaudits* . . .

#### IV

The inference is surely valid that Whitman's memories of the arias and rhymeless recitatives of Italian opera strongly influenced the character of his own chants. He does not use the verb, to write. He says sing, warble, carol, trill, or chant. His critics are bothered when he calls himself a *chansonnier*, the very thing, they say, that he was *not*. But, to himself, that was what he was or sought to be. He associates himself with singers, or has in mind the effects of orators or the declamations of actors before the footlights, far more than he has in mind the conventional poetry of libraries. Whitman wrote directly from living impulses and immediate sights rather than from books. During the incubation of *Leaves of Grass* he was stimulated by the memory of the best vocalists and the best operas available at that day. Poetry to him was a kind of passionate musical utterance, tallying the rhythmic progress of humanity. He abandoned himself to it in a kind of world-emotion, as he did to the singing of Bettini or Alboni.

Significant, I think, is his frequent application of the musical term, *recitative*, to his verse, or to poetry in general. Here are a few examples:

Such be the *recitative* I bring to thee

—*Thou Mother with Thy Equal Brood.*

My life and *recitative*, containing birth, youth, mid-age years

—*On, On the Same, Ye Jocund Twain.*

These *recitatives* for thee, my book and the war are one

—*To Thee Old Cause.*

Thee for my *recitative*,

Thee in the driving storm, even as now

—*To a Locomotive in Winter.*

In a far-away northern country in the placid pastoral region,

Lives my farmer friend, the theme of my *recitative*, a famous tamer of oxen

—*The Ox-Tamer.*

"Vocalism" is the title of one of his poems, and "Warble in Lilac Time," "These Carols," and "Old Chants" of others. Some examples of his incessant references to his own verse as oral are as follows:

"Then for addition and variety I launch forth in my *vocalism*."

—*Specimen Days*.

Democracy! near at hand to you *a throat is now inflating itself and joyfully singing*.

I would *sing* in my copious song, *Year of Meteors*.

Among my lovers and *caroling these songs*, have I sung so capricious and loud my savage songs?

—*Calamus*.

I exultant to be ready for them will now *shake out carols* stronger and haughtier than have ever yet been heard upon earth. . . .

*Caroling free, singing our song of God, chanting our chant of pleasant exhilaration,*

—*Passage to India*.

I have not felt to *warble and trill* however sweetly . . .

For you, O Democracy . . . for you, for you, I am *trilling these songs*

—*For You, O Democracy*.

I *chant* the world in my Western song.

—*A Broadway Pageant*.

Come said the Muse,

*Sing me a song* no poet has yet *chanted*,

*Sing me the universal*

—*Song of the Universal*.

*Erect, inflated, and fully self-esteeming be the chant; and then America will listen with pleased ears*

—*Democratic Vistas*.

I myself as connector, as *chansonnier* of a great future am now speaking

—*The Centenarian's Story*.

And I send these words to Paris with my love,

And I guess some *chansonniers* there will understand me. . . .

I will sing a song for you *ma femme*

—*France, in the Eighteenth Year of These States*.

To reiterate, Whitman's whole conception of poetry, on the side of expression and delivery, seems to be colored by the pose of the singer, or in less degree by that of the actor or the orator, out at the footlights, reaching his audience with his voice. There is even a considerable visual resemblance between the pages of Whitman's poetry and the pages of operatic librettos. To him poetry is always song and the poet always a singer, a warbler, or a chansonnier. This is the underlying view even in, "I sound my barbaric yawp

over the roofs of the world." To most nineteenth century poets, poetry is something written and it has circulation by being read. One is reminded of Tennyson's "one poor poet's scroll." To Whitman poetry is something uttered. He writes as one seeking to achieve his effects through the living voice.

Some might indeed find in the structure of his more elaborate poems something orchestral and symphonic. There are certainly parallels that suggest themselves. As does a sonata or symphony, his poems not infrequently present a main motive, with amplification, balance, and distribution, repetition and recapitulation. The inner progress is now delayed, now pushed forward; there are auxiliary parts and contrasting movements. In the scale of the composition, in the manner of exposition, and in the working out and building up of mood, there is often something that may fairly be termed symphonic. But, of course, we have to do here only with analogy. The word *symphony* is one which Whitman used but rarely. There is little likelihood that he had this form of composition in mind when he planned his verse. Attempts have often been made to endow poetry with musical structure. Certain French poets and a few contemporary American poets have tried to write word-symphonies, and with them may be placed the author of "London Voluntaries." But it would be error to assume that Whitman consciously attempted the symphonic. The American poet of the nineteenth century who sought to make a "symphony in words," who thought that a poem could be put together in the same manner as a composition for musical instruments, was not Walt Whitman but that dual genius—poet and professional musician—Sidney Lanier.

1925.



## CAEDMON'S DREAM SONG

The "Caedmon legend," meaning by this Bede's story of the gift of the craft of song, brought to the poet in his middle age by a nocturnal visitant in a dream,<sup>1</sup> has had recurrent interest for scholars. Bede says that the command of the dream figure and Caedmon's ability to obey it and to compose verse were interpreted as a direct inspiration from Heaven by those who assembled at the monastery of the Abbess Hild to hear the story. Florence of Worcester (d. 1118), writing under the year 680, speaks of Cedmon (his spelling) as the celebrated monk who "received from Heaven the free gift of poetic inspiration."<sup>2</sup> Many scholars, reading of the Old English poet in the passages by Bede and by Florence of Worcester, speak of the Caedmon story as though it had a tinge of the miraculous or supernatural, or as though it might be apocryphal. Here are a few illustrations.

W. D. Conybeare (1826) speaks of Bede's account of "this extraordinary man" as "tinged with the credulity of his age."<sup>3</sup> Bernhard Ten Brink (1887) speaks of the "Caedmon legend."<sup>4</sup> Richard Wülker (1885) speaks of a "legendary embellishment" (*legendenhaften Ausschmückung*) in Bede's account.<sup>5</sup> Henry Morley (1888)

<sup>1</sup> *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*, Book IV, chap. xxiv.

<sup>2</sup> *Chronicon ex Chronicis*.

<sup>3</sup> *Illustrations of Anglo-Saxon Poetry* (1826), p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> *History of English Literature*, Appendix to Book I, chaps. iv, viii.

<sup>5</sup> *Grundriss zur Geschichte der angelsächsischen Litteratur*, chap. iii, Part 1, § 4.

raises the question whether the "marvel" may not "have been feigned." <sup>6</sup> He says:

Pious frauds were accordant with the civilisation of a time which thought it no sin to mislead heathen opinion in small or even great things, when it appeared that so, with hurt to none, men sitting in darkness might be brought more readily into the way of everlasting truth. There are few in any Church whom any plea would now so blind that they could think of stepping Godward on a lie. But of good Christians who sacrificed themselves to their work in the far past, let us not forget that when they did feign miracles (and here there was a miracle believed rather than feigned), they who feigned were also of the world in which they laboured, eager to stir with a new life rude masses of people steeped in superstition; for whom marvels were invented by their heathen teachers, and who, knowing as yet nothing of the ways of God in nature, saw the supernatural in every sight, sound, or incident that raised their wonder.

Morley comments, however, that the tale, read as it stands, "is perhaps only a misreading of the natural into the supernatural." Henry Bradley writes (1886) that "the story of the beginning of Caedmon's poetical career is no doubt more or less legendary." <sup>7</sup> G. H. Gerould (1916) speaks of Bede's story as "somewhat adorned with legendary trappings." <sup>8</sup>

Some Old English scholars were led to disbelieve Bede's tale of the poet, or to doubt Caedmon's composition of the hymn, on the ground that much the same story has been told many times of the inspiration of other poets. The initial skeptic was Sir Francis Palgrave (1832).<sup>9</sup> He was led to reject belief in the Caedmon story because of similar stories of peasant or husbandmen poets in other literatures. He found in the *Bibliotheca Patrum* <sup>10</sup> the story, theoretically attached to the author of the *Heliand*, of a Saxon plowman, who, while in charge of a few cattle, slept under a tree and heard a voice from Heaven ordering him to sing of God. He then became a poet, beginning his career with a song of Creation. Henry Bradley, cited in the preceding paragraph, retained something of Palgrave's skepticism:

<sup>6</sup> *English Writers*, II, 76.

<sup>7</sup> *Dictionary of National Biography*.

<sup>8</sup> *Saints' Legends* (1916), p. 60.

<sup>9</sup> "Observations on the History of Caedmon," in *Archaeologia, or Miscellaneous Tracts Related to Antiquity* (published by the Society of Antiquaries, London), XXIV (1832), 341.

<sup>10</sup> XVI (Paris, 1644), 609. The story was first given in the second part of the *Praefatio* by Flavius Illyricus in 1562. It appears too late to have much weight and seems to have been borrowed from Bede.

The incident of Caedmon's dream is on other grounds open to strong suspicion. The story is just such a legend as would be naturally suggested by the desire to account for the wonderful phenomenon of the display of great poetic genius on the part of an unlettered rustic, and similar traditions are found in the literatures of many different nations and periods.

What are some of the other uses of this legend of the gift of song in a dream in comparative literature and folk-lore, that have led many to disbelieve the Caedmon story? In the Exordium of the *Theogony* (l. 23) we are told that Hesiod kept sheep upon the slopes of Helicon; for it was there that the Muse descended to visit him, and, after rebuking the shepherds for their idleness and grossness, gave him her sacred laurel branch and taught him song. Recently, in a note, "Bede and Pausanias," Nellie S. Aurner<sup>11</sup> has pointed out another parallel in Pausanias' *Description of Greece* i. 21. In this passage Æschylus recounts that Dionysus appeared to him in his sleep, when he was a stripling, and bade him write tragedy, and later, on awakening, he found that he could do so.

Mrs. Aurner inquires in her note whether there are "other examples of analogous use of this motif." Besides the familiar Hesiod parallel and the story found by Sir Francis Palgrave, attached to the author of the *Heliand*, C. E. Bouterwek<sup>12</sup> directed attention, in 1854, to a Scandinavian story of Halbiorn, a goatherd who sought vainly to sing of a dead bard, Thorleifr, buried under the barrow where his goats pastured. One night a huge figure arose from the opening barrow, touched his tongue with its fingers, spoke some poetical lines, and returned to its tomb. Halbiorn retained the verses in his memory and became a poet. These narratives come

<sup>11</sup> *Modern Language Notes* (December, 1926), p. 535. Pausanias also narrates (ix. 23) concerning the "Hymn to Proserpina," composed by Pindar, that Proserpina appeared to Pindar in his sleep ten days before he died and told him that he should praise her in her own kingdom, though he had neglected her when on earth. The hymn was dictated to a Theban woman, a relation of Pausanias, by his ghost, and written down by her as soon as she awoke.

See also Dr. F. Klaeber's note, "Analogues of the Story of Caedmon," *Modern Language Notes*, XLII, 390, which appeared after the present article on Caedmon's dream song was written.

<sup>12</sup> In *De Cedmone poeta Anglo-Saxonum vetustissimo brevis Dissertatio* (1845), Bouterwek speaks of "Quod miraculum" and of "haec simplicitas et credulitas illorum temporum." He cites the *Thorleifsaga* (from *Script. Hist. Island.*, III, 106) in *Caedmon's des Angelsachsen biblische Dichtungen* (1854), p. ccxxvi. Holthausen's *Altisländisches Lesebuch* reprints it for modern readers. Bouterwek also points out that J. Grimm's *Deutsche Mythologie* gives a shorter version (see 3d ed., Vol. I, chap. xxx, on "Dichtkunst"). Grimm cites the analogues of Homer, Pindar, and Æschylus, in this chapter.

from classical antiquity or from the Middle Ages. It is time, it seems to me, that the Caedmon story be reconsidered in relation to more recent lore of dream songs. In these days of the influence of Dr. Sigmund Freud and of the lore of the subconscious mind, Bede's story of Caedmon's dream poetry has a greatly enhanced interest. It was Mrs. Aurner's inquiry which led me to realize that the analogous material which might be arrayed alongside Bede's account of the composition of Caedmon's hymn is larger than might be thought; and that a survey of some of it brings the conviction that we should discard terms like "miracle," "marvel," and "legend," in discussions of it, unless we are prepared to use these terms when we speak of similar material coming from nearer our own time, or actually from our own time.

When lingering upon the subject of the poet's dependence on the spirit of song for his inspiration, one is tempted to begin, though they are not directly relevant, with Plato's remarks (*Ion* § 534):

There is no invention in him [the poet] until he has been inspired and is out of his senses, and the mind is no longer in him; when he has not attained to this state he is powerless and unable to utter his oracles.

One is tempted, also, to dwell upon the popularity of the Dream-Vision form in the Middle Ages as bearing relation to the dream inspiration of poetry. But my citations of added material will be limited to the more directly germane, and they will be drawn from modern times.

We have no thought of the supernatural in connection with Milton; yet it is not new to remark that Milton seems to have thought of himself as divinely inspired. Like Dante, he expresses his dependence on the Muses. Witness these passages from *Paradise Lost*, to be associated with his opening invocation.

. . . Yet not alone, while thou  
Visit'st my slumbers nightly, or when Morn  
Purples the East. Still govern thou my song,  
Urania, and fit audience find, though few. . . .

If answerable style I can obtain  
Of my celestial Patroness, who deigns  
Her nightly visitation unimplored,  
And dictates to me slumbering, or inspires  
Easy my unpremeditated verse. . . .

. . . Unless an age too late, or cold  
Climate, or years, damp my intended wing

Depressed; and much they may if all be mine,  
Not hers who brings it nightly to my ear.

Milton's Urania is a supernatural figure who appears to him in nocturnal visitations and guides his poetry. To Milton, as to Caedmon, a figure appears who directly inspires his verse.

Blake, too, saw a figure who impelled him to the composition of his *Songs of Innocence*.

On a cloud I saw a child  
And he laughing sang to me:  
"Pipe a song about a Lamb!"  
So I piped with merry cheer.  
"Piper, pipe that song again";  
So I piped: he wept to hear.

Reference may be made in passing to Young's "Night Thoughts," to Coleridge's dream poem "Kubla Khan," and to Keats's "Sleep and Poetry."

Clearly the conception of the soul creating poetry in sleep belongs to no one age but is general and persistent.<sup>13</sup> Of special interest, I think, and deserving of attention in any discussion of dream poetry are the accounts of dream composition to be found in the poetry of aboriginal or primitive peoples.

The account of Chippewa music by Frances Densmore<sup>14</sup> contains a section of dream songs afterward used as war songs or otherwise. Miss Densmore remarks:

Like other dream songs, these were said to have been composed during a dream or on waking from a dream. Many of them are associated with some animal which becomes the *manidó* of the dreamer. . . . In other instances he imagines that animals or objects in nature are singing and that he learns their songs. . . . All the dream songs are supposed to be spontaneous melodies, and therein lies their chief importance in connection with the analytical study of Indian music.

The story of one song (No. 112) is that when the composer was a boy he had a dream, and in his dream he heard the trees singing as though they were alive. When he awoke he made up the song, in which he repeats what he heard the trees say. Another youth

<sup>13</sup> The subject of the relation of dreams and poetry is treated in *Poetry and Dreams* by Professor F. C. Prescott (1912), some paragraphs of which are reprinted in *The Poetic Mind*, by the same author (1922). Of interest also is the chapter "The Spark from Heaven" in *The Poet's Poet* by Elizabeth Atkins (1922).

<sup>14</sup> *Bureau of American Ethnology*, No. 45 (1910), pp. 126-165.

heard the crows in the trees and imagined he learned his song from them. The song was first a dream song and then a war-dance song. Miss Densmore writes elsewhere that the

oldest Indian songs were said to be "received in dreams." This process cannot be described but seems akin to what we call "inspiration." It does not appear that songs received in this manner were ever changed, the belief being that the song was taught the Indian by a supernatural visitant. Such songs were associated with the exercise of what is commonly termed supernatural power.<sup>15</sup>

When writing of "The Ghost-Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890," James Mooney observes of the ghost-dance songs:

The Ghost-dance songs were of the utmost importance in connection with the study of the messiah religion, as we find embodied in them much of the doctrine itself, with more of the special tribal mythologies, together with such innumerable references to old-time customs, ceremonies, and modes of life long since obsolete as make up a regular symposium of aboriginal thought and practice. There is no limit to the number of these songs, as every trance at every dance produces a new one, the trance subject after regaining consciousness embodying his experience in the spirit world in the form of a song, which is sung at the next dance and succeeding performances until superseded by other songs originating in the same way. Thus, a single dance may easily result in twenty or thirty new songs. While songs are thus born and die, certain ones which appeal especially to the Indian heart, on account of their mythology, pathos, or peculiar sweetness, live and are perpetuated. There are also with each tribe certain songs which are a regular part of the ceremonial, as the opening song and the closing song, which are repeated at every dance. Of these the closing song is the most important and permanent. In some cases certain songs constitute a regular series, detailing the experiences of the same person in successive trance visions. First in importance, for number, richness of reference, beauty of sentiment, and rhythm of language, are the songs of the Arapaho.<sup>16</sup>

Mr. Mooney reprints songs from the trance-visions of many singers, relating their trance-experiences. Some tell of messengers from the spirit world, and in some (as No. 22) the vision is of the Messiah and the song inspired by him.

A. W. Howitt, writing of the native tribes of Southeast Australia, relates that the Ngarigo tribe believed that they could see ghosts in dreams, and the Yuin Gommeras that they could get songs in dreams. One tribesman said that his uncle came to him during sleep and taught him songs (charms) against sickness and other evils.

<sup>15</sup> *American Speech* (June, 1927), p. 393.

<sup>16</sup> *Fourteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (Washington, 1896), p. 952.

In the tribes with which I have acquaintance I find it to be a common belief that the songs, using that word in its widest meaning, as including all kinds of aboriginal poetry, are obtained by the bards from the spirits of the deceased, usually of their kindred, during sleep in dreams. Thus, as I have before said, the *Birraark* [who combined the functions of the seer, the spirit-medium, and the bard] professed to receive his poetic inspirations from the *Mrarts* [ghosts], as well as the accompanying dances, which he was supposed to have first seen in ghost-land. In the Narrang-ga tribe there are men who profess to learn songs and dances from the departed spirits. These men are called *Gurildras*.

In the Yuan tribe some men received their songs in dreams, others when waking.<sup>17</sup>

Illustrative material of this character might be multiplied almost indefinitely. Careful search would show, I think, many Indian examples of stories of dream-song singers very closely paralleling the Caedmon story. A subject that may well have the attention of some investigator is the conception of poetry as a kind of language especially suitable to spirits, or perhaps especially suitable to revelations. There is a degree of kinship between the poem and the oracle.

It has been the purpose of this note to point out that instead of referring to the Caedmon story as a "legend" or "marvel," we should associate it with the dream-lore and poetry of all peoples of all ages. Certainly the evidence brought forward for suspecting the authenticity of the story, namely, the widespread currency of stories of similar character, is really no evidence against its genuineness. In particular, it should not lead us to skepticism concerning Caedmon's existence or the nature of his inspiration. Poets themselves, and others as well, have always revered their gifts as something apart from themselves, and divine. In the history of the human race, many a poet, in any country and any age, has had the conviction that a spirit not his own was inspiring him.

1928

<sup>17</sup> *The Native Tribes of South-East Australia* (1904), pp. 416, 436.

## ON POE'S "THE CITY IN THE SEA"

### I

Inquiry into the materials entering into a work of art is always of interest. Lovers and students of literature—these are not always identical—like to examine the raw stuff that a poet has transmuted. Impressions from a long period of years and from many sources, the spoils of memory carried away from wide wanderings, often flash together in a poet's creative process. When they are detected and brought in conjunction, one can watch the ordering of them into a pattern. There will always be interest in a poet's play of mind over his materials, the operation of his "shaping spirit of imagination." Yet, to follow these, there must be a survey of what the materials are, and herein lies the justification of the source-hunter—a type of scholar so often disparaged.

Poe was an original and imaginative poet, and "The City in the Sea" is one of the most original and imaginative of his poems. It owes very little to the work of his predecessors or his contemporaries. A number of scholars, however, have noted influences that should be taken into account by an interpreter of the poem. To these I wish to add one component more that went into the crucible of the poet's mind; namely, tales ancient, medieval, and modern of sunken cities.

Poe changed the title of his poem twice. When it first appeared, in the volume of 1831, it was called "The Doomed City." Reprinted



in *The Southern Literary Messenger* for August, 1836, it was entitled "The City of Sin." In *The American Whig Review* for April, 1845, it assumed the name that he retained, "The City in the Sea," with the sub-title "A Prophecy."

A writer signing himself "H. J.," who contributed "E. A. Poe: An Unnoticed Plagiarism" to the issue of *The Academy* for June 25, 1910, found by accident, he says, the source of the poem. Poe draws, he thinks, upon the Book of Isaiah when he suggests a city doomed for its sins. That Babylon was in his mind is shown by lines 16 and 17:

Up domes—up spires—up kingly halls—  
Up fanes—up Babylon-like walls—

Almost surely, too, Poe's culminating lines—

Down, down that town shall settle hence,  
Hell, rising from a thousand thrones,  
Shall do it reverence.

—derive from the passage concerning Babylon in Isaiah xiv, 9:

Hell from beneath is moved up for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nation.

A few touches may have come from Revelation xvi-xviii.<sup>1</sup> "H. J.'s" term "plagiarism" is, however, much too harsh to be used in connection with "The City in the Sea." Poe's doomed city may have been symbolically associated in his mind with Babylon, and his last lines were probably suggested by the scriptural passage quoted above; but we have to do here with poetic echoes, merely, not plagiarism.<sup>2</sup>

It is important to note, too, that Babylon was not the only scriptural city that Poe had in mind. Mr. J. H. Whitty pointed out in his edition of Poe's poems (1911) that there is a passage in *Al*

<sup>1</sup> For Poe's citations from the Scriptures throughout his work, consult William Mentzel Forrest, *Biblical Allusions in Poe* (New York, 1928). For his reading in general, see Killis Campbell, "Poe's Reading," *The University of Texas Bulletin*, October 8, 1925. Studies in English, No. 5. Additions and Corrections, No. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Other influences on the poem have been noted in Professor Killis Campbell's scholarly edition of Poe's poems (1917). Citing W. L. Weber's *Selections from the Southern Poets*, he remarks that Poe may have been influenced by Byron's account of the end of the world in his poem "Darkness," and in a less degree by passages in Shelley's "Lines Written among the Euganean Hills," though these indebtednesses, if they exist, are slight.

*Aaraaf* that may be a foreshadowing of "The City in the Sea." Yet the resemblance is not very close. The second part of *Al Aaraaf* opens with a description. High on a mountain, catching the rays of the evening sun, arose a pile of gorgeous columns that flashed down on the wave below. On these as a crown sat a dome, from which a window "of one circular diamond . . . looked out above into the purple air." References follow to "each cornice," "each architrave," and to Achæan statues." The passage ends:

Friezes from Tadmor and Persepolis—  
From Balbec, and the stilly clear abyss  
Of Beautiful Gomorrah! O, the wave  
Is now upon thee—but too late to save.<sup>3</sup>

Of especial interest is Poe's note upon the *Al Aaraaf* passage:

"O, the wave"—Ula Deguisi is the Turkish appellation; but, on its own shores, it is called Bahar Loth, or Almotanah. There were undoubtedly more than two cities engulfed in the "dead sea." In the valley of Siddim were five—Adrah, Zeboin, Zoar, Sodom, and Gomorrah. Stephen of Byzantium mentions eight, and Strabo thirteen, (engulphed)—but the last is out of all reason.

It is said (Tacitus, Strabo, Josephus, Daniel of St. Saba, Nau, Maundrell, Troilo, D'Arvieux) that after an excessive drought, the vestiges of columns, walls, &c. are seen above the surface. At any season, such remains may be discovered by looking down into the transparent lake, and such distances as would argue the existence of many settlements in the space now usurped by the 'Asphaltites.'

The *locale* of Poe's "City in the Sea" is "far down within the dim West," but his sea surely owes features to the Dead Sea, the Salt Sea of the Scriptures. Poe was interested in legends of the Dead Sea. Professor T. O. Mabbott, who has engaged in much scholarly research into the sources of Poe's allusions, reminded interpreters of the poem of Mr. Whitty's citation of the *Al Aaraaf* passage, in "A Few Notes on Poe"<sup>4</sup> and he added new material concerning

<sup>3</sup> Compare also from Poe's "Dreamland":

Mountains toppling evermore  
Into seas without a shore . . .

Lakes that endlessly outspread  
Their lone waters, lone and dead.

And compare the sinking of the House of Usher into the tarn.

<sup>4</sup> *Modern Language Notes*, XXXV, 374 (June, 1920). Professor Mabbott has examined many or most of the writers cited in the passage from *Al Aaraaf*, though his results are unpublished. He notes in Daniel of St. Saba (English translation by the Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society, vol. IV, London, 1896, under the title of *The Pilgrimage of the Russian Abbot Daniel*, section xxxviii, p. 35) the statement that

minor contemporary poems having something in common with Poe's.

It seems clear, however, that neither Babylon nor Gomorrah accounts adequately for Poe's phantom city. Babylon was situated along the Euphrates. It was not a city on the sea but an inland city, and Sodom and Gomorrah met their awful fate by a rain of brimstone and fire from heaven "upon those cities and all the plain" (Genesis xxiv, xxv, xxvii). Poe's city in the sea was not yet razed but still a city, with shrines, palaces, turrets, and kingly halls, when it was engulfed.

Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven:

And he overthrew those cities and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.

And so he [Abraham] looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace.

The Dead Sea may later have covered the plain where were the five wicked cities of the vale of Siddim and its origin may be associated with the main legend, but their annihilation did not come from its waves but more terribly. All Poe's literary creations were composite in character. Blending with his scriptural memories of Babylon and the uprising of Hell to welcome the doomed city, and with his picture of a beautiful Gomorrah, doomed also, was surely the memory or thought of a city engulfed by water. There is a vast lore of such sunken cities, sometimes visible through the surface of the water in fair weather; and this lore is ancient, medieval, modern, but not scriptural. With some of it Poe was surely acquainted.

Probably the most celebrated sunken city of antiquity was Helike, situated in Achaia, along the coast of the Aegean sea. According to

"beneath the dead sea are the torments of Hell," but he does not see how Poe could have known this work. He believes that Poe relied on some encyclopedic compilation for his citations but thinks that he might have read Josephus, *Bellum Judaicum*, Bk. IV. Gomorrah, he points out, could have "Babylon-like walls," which could exist only somewhere else than in Babylon.

Poe's tastes led him to glance at many minor classical works, and he may have read passages in Josephus. But if so, he used them little. Josephus describes "Lake Alphaltitus" (the modern Dead Sea) in Bk. IV, and remarks that adjacent to it is the land of Sodom, now all burnt up.

Forrest, *op. cit.*, p. 80, remarks that Poe spoke of a deep Hell, the abode of demons under the sea. But it does not seem to me that Poe definitely localized Hell under the Dead Sea. His Hell in "The City in the Sea" seems to me that of the passage in Isaiah.

Herakleides Ponticus, a contemporary, its destruction took place in 373 B. C. The story of its sinking may be read also in Herodotus, Polybius, Pliny, Ovid, and others. Strabo merely mentions the fate of Helike, but he gives a detailed account of an earthquake and the engulfing of a city. Ptolemy is another who described the fate of Helike. Poe's "A Descent into the Maelstrom," a story that testifies to his interest in phenomena of the sea, has in it a reference to Ptolemy, though he may not have been, as Poe terms him, a "Nubian geographer." I select for illustration the account of Helike from the *Description of Greece* of Pausanias (Book VII, 24), not because I think Poe relied especially upon this account, but because it is a full one.<sup>5</sup> Helike, too, was destroyed for its sins.

Here there used to be a city Helice and here the Ionians had a most holy sanctuary of Heliconian Poseidon. . . . Homer also refers to Helice and Heliconian Poseidon. But in after time the Achæans of Helice forced some suppliants from the sanctuary and put them to death. The wrath of Poseidon did not tarry. The land was instantly visited by an earthquake, which swallowed up not only the buildings, but the very ground on which the city stood. . . . They say that the earthquake of Helice was of . . . the kind that levels with the ground; and that besides the earthquake, another disaster befell the doomed city in the winter-time. The sea advanced far over the land and submerged the whole of Helice, and in the grove of Poseidon the water was so deep that only the tops of the trees were visible. So what between the suddenness of the earthquake and the simultaneous rush of the sea, the billows sucked down Helice and every soul in the place. A like fate befell a city on Mount Sipylus; it disappeared into a chasm, and from the fissure in the mountain water gushed forth, and the chasm became a lake named Salve. The ruins of the city could still be seen in the lake until the water of the torrent covered them up. The ruins of Helice are also visible, but not so clearly as before, for they have been eaten away by the brine.

Citation of the many writers of classical antiquity who make reference to the fate of Helike may be found in the *Real Encyclopædie der Klassischen Altertumswissenschaft*.<sup>6</sup> It would hardly be profitable, it seems to me, to canvass these to learn upon which, if any of them, Poe may have relied. Much space would be required to pass them in review, and the question is not one of borrowing of details but merely of suggestion. An obvious conjecture is that Poe had read and echoed Strabo.

<sup>5</sup> Translation of Sir James G. Fraser (1898).

<sup>6</sup> Edited by Pauly-Wissowa.

Inquirers into the subject will learn that many other legends of towns sinking into the sea, stories of doomed cities, villages, castles, convents, and churches, have had currency in many lands. Especially common is lore of sinkings into lakes, like the sinking of the city on Mount Sipylus mentioned by Pausanias. They are found in all parts of the world, Greece, Italy, Germany, Abyssinia, Denmark, Wales, Ireland. Almost always, too, the disappearance under the waters is the result of a supernatural visitation, incurred through some transgression. The submerging is a judgment, divine retribution for an offense.<sup>7</sup>

Finally, readers of Poe's poem may be reminded of two historic engulfings of modern times, in the century preceding Poe's composition of his poem. The city of Callao in Peru was submerged in the year 1746 by an earthquake. The story was later told of it that it was still visible sometimes in the sea, like the Helike of Pausanias. The great earthquake of Lisbon came in 1755. Accounts tell that the sea came in mountainous waves, from thirty to sixty feet higher than the highest tide, and drowned the city. My contention in this note is that, in a survey of the materials entering Poe's poem, reference to European legends of engulfed cities should take their place alongside the symbolic association of it with ancient Babylon and Gomorrah, doomed for their sins.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> For references to later legends of drowned cities, and for bibliography, consult Sir James G. Fraser's annotations in his translation of *The Description of Greece* of Pausanias. Connop Thirlwall, historian and Bishop of St. David's, published an article "On Some Traditions Relating to the Submersion of Ancient Cities" in *The Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature*, second series, 1859. The paper was read May 17, 1858. See also, Franz Schmarsel, *Die Sage von der untergangenen Stadt* (Berlin, 1913); René Basset, "Les Villes Englouties," *Revue des Traditions Populaires*, vols. XXVII, XXVIII, etc.

Mary E. Phillips (*Edgar Allan Poe: The Man*, 1926, I, 399) cited the Hon. R. M. Hogg of Irvine, Ayrshire, Scotland, as believing that the Allan family must have been familiar with Gaelic traditions, borrowed from the Norse, of a submerged city. There is such a tradition in the Hebrides. Here, he thought, was the basis for "The City in the Sea." But Poe was a boy of six when he was in Scotland with the Allans, in 1815, and in general his slant was less toward Gaelic than toward classical and scriptural antiquity.

<sup>8</sup> De Quincey, too, touched on the theme of the sunken city. Professor J. B. Hubbell has directed my attention to "Savannah-la-Mar," which opens: "God smote Savannah-la-Mar, and, in one night, by earthquake, removed her, with all her towers, standing and population sleeping, from the steadfast foundations of the shore to the coral beds of the ocean." De Quincey's short paper first appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine* for June, 1845, fourteen years later than the publication of "The City in the Sea."

## II

Surely, however, if stress is to be placed on some fated city singled out from the lore of such cities ancient, medieval and modern, that city should be the Scriptural Tyre. It was doomed like Babylon and Gomorrah for its sins but doomed to engulfment as they were not. Tyre, most of all, deserves association with Poe's memorable city in the sea. He might even have derived his final title from it. Tyre has often been and is often still referred to from the pulpit as "the city in the sea." It is said by geographers to have been originally on an island. The following citations from the Book of Ezekiel may well be recalled by the student of the poem:

Ezekiel, 26:19. For thus saith the Lord God; When I shall make thee a desolate city, like the cities that are not inhabited; when I shall bring up the deep upon thee, and great waters shall cover thee;

20. When I shall bring thee down with them that descend into the pit, with the people of old time, and shall set thee in the low parts of the earth, in places desolate of old, with them that go down to the pit, that thou be not inhabited; and I shall set glory in the land of the living;

21. I will make thee a terror, and thou shalt be no more: though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again, saith the Lord God.

27:27. Thy riches and thy fairs, thy merchandise, thy mariners, and thy pilots, thy calkers, and the occupiers of thy merchandise, and all thy men of war, that are in thee, and in all thy company which is in the midst of thee, shall fall into the midst of the seas in the day of thy ruin.

32. And in their wailing they shall take up a lamentation for thee, and lament over thee, saying, What city is like Tyrus, like the destroyed in the midst of the sea?

34. In the time when thou shalt be broken by the seas in the depths of the waters thy merchandise and all thy company in the midst of thee shall fall.

28:8. They shall bring thee down to the pit and thou shalt die the deaths of them that are slain in the midst of the seas.

William Mentzel Forrest's *Biblical Allusions in Poe* (1928) cites a number of allusions by the poet from the Book of Ezekiel, and Dr. Forrest states that in his critical writings Poe mentions Tyre.<sup>9</sup>

• 1932, 1935

<sup>9</sup> Prof. H. M. Belden (*American Literature*, VII, 334-336, Nov., 1935) believes that Poe owes more in imagery and suggestion to Dante's city Dis (*Inferno*, viii-x) than to other "sources."

## WHITMAN AND BIRD POETRY

Some of the most beautiful bird poetry in the English language comes from the latter part of the sixteenth century and from the first part of the nineteenth. The sixteenth-century pieces, like Shakespeare's "Hark, Hark, the Lark!" are buoyant and carefree, as though they were composed in the sunlight, in the manner of sixteenth-century pastoral poetry in general. The nineteenth-century lyrics come not from the sunlight but from the shadow, and they are weighted with thought. They are intellectualized; the earlier pieces are not. Both are types of bird poems that the world cannot have again, quite aside from matters of poetical structure and expression. If they exhibit bygone modes of form, they show also bygone modes of thought. No doubt the Elizabethan way of writing of birds seemed hollowly conventional to the poets of a few hundred years later. Similarly there is something hollowly conventional to us in the bird poems of nineteenth-century romanticism. We recognize their distinction and beauty, but something invalid in them hinders us from giving them the whole-hearted admiration once theirs.

Wordsworth's "The Skylark" and his sonnet of that name, Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale," and Shelley's "To a Skylark" take the lead in a list of earlier nineteenth-century bird poems. From American poetry of the same half-century comes Bryant's "To a Waterfowl." All these lyrics depart, in the manner of the time that produced

them, from earlier models. For one thing, in the bird poems of Chaucer and the Elizabethans the birds are endowed with the conventional feelings of the poets and sing of the same staple topics as the poets. Witness Chaucer's

And somme songen clere  
Layes of love, that joye it was to here,  
In worshipynge and in preysing of hir make . . . .  
Upon the braunches ful of blosmes softe . . . .  
And humblycly songen hir repentyng  
And sworn on the blosmes to be trewe. . . .

It is a truism to point out that Chaucer's birds are stationary on trees or branches, fixed there, as in the preceding quotation, or in Spenser's description of the Idle Lake in a canto of the *Faerie Queene*.

No tree whose braunches did not bravely spring;  
No braunch whereon a fine bird did not sitt;  
No bird but did her shrill notes sweetly sing;  
No song but did containe a lovely ditt. . . .

It is also a truism to observe that in the nineteenth-century poems the birds are not stationary but in motion. And in the poet's treatment they become symbols of something, like Shelley's skylark, which ceases to be a bird and becomes a spirit of joy or harmony, or Keats's nightingale, whose song takes the poet from reality to an otherworld. The bard as he listens and meditates finds some thought or lesson for himself that he may carry away.

Stock, too, for the romantic poets, though this is less often dwelt upon, is the poet's assumption of envy of birds, of their unalloyed and enduring happiness contrasted with the transitoriness and pain of man's existence. Compare Shelley when addressing the skylark:

We look before and after,  
And pine for what is not;  
Our sincerest laughter  
With some pain is fraught;  
Our sweetest songs are those  
That tell of saddest thought. . . .

I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.

Or compare Keats envying the nightingale:

But being too happy in thine happiness. . . .  
What thou amongst the leaves hast never known,  
The weariness, the fever, and the fret  
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan. . . .



Thou wast not born for death, immortal bird!  
No hungry generations tread thee down. . . .

There is no need to linger on the "lessons" found for themselves by Wordsworth and Bryant, or on Matthew Arnold's "Philomela" of the middle of the century. When Arnold listens to the voice of the nightingale on his English lawn it recalls to his mind the old Greek legend, and its song is one of "eternal passion, eternal pain."

To such poets the bird is mainly material for subjective thought. They cannot forget themselves as they view it, and think of its experiences and destinies apart from their own. They contemplate it to find in its hypothetical situation something to illustrate their own pain.

The great shift of interest in the middle or Darwinian decades of the century, bringing the careful observation of creatures and things for their own sake, might be counted upon to bring difference in bird poetry and it did. The kind of thing characteristic of the romantic poets becomes obsolete. Their reiterated assumptions of the bird's unalloyed happiness as over against man's tragedy seem annoyingly false to one who knows much of birds. Such make-believe will not bear examination. In the day of the ornithologist and of Audubon clubs the contrast of the older poets between the pure joy of the bird's destiny and the wretchedness of man's seems the pretty fiction that it is.

It remained for our American poet, Walt Whitman, who so often led the way into new paths, to discard the traditional assumptions for a genuine departure. It has often been remarked that Whitman is curiously in advance of his day; that his ideas have more in common with twentieth- than with nineteenth-century thought. This is true of his bird poetry too. If Whitman composed a new and poignant type of personal elegy in "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed" and exhibits a new attitude when he writes of death, he wrought out a new type of bird poem as well. In his "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking," composed in 1859, he thinks of his "wild bird from Alabama" with subordination of himself and with complete sympathy for it. What he learns from its passionate song for its lost mate is not some stock moral lesson, like that closing Bryant's "To a Waterfowl," but the two things, the meaning of death, and what can be expressed in song.

"Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" is not a clearly ordered poem. Clear order is not one of Whitman's gifts. But its feeling

seems the more vitally poignant that the poem is not perfectly ordered. It is a lament transcending poetic conventionalities, in that the tragedy is not man's but a wild bird's. Whitman has made of his theme, bird poem though it be, one of the most devastating love elegies in poetry.

Whitman creates for the framework of his poem a mystical background of night, the sea, and a moonlit scene in June. The poem has for its interwoven themes the sea's voice, a bird's song, and the questioning soul of a boy—himself. Whitman was hardly a normal boy, for he had no wish to shoot the birds he watched or to steal their eggs. He is intensely interested in them as birds. His "feathered guests from Alabama" are "two together," "singing all time, minding no time," whether the winds "blow north" or "blow south," whether "day comes white" or "night comes black."

Till of a sudden,  
May-be kill'd, unknown to her mate,  
One forenoon the she-bird crouch'd not on the nest,  
Nor return'd that afternoon, nor the next,  
Nor ever appear'd again. . . .

Yes, when the stars glisten'd,  
All night long on the prong of a moss-scallop'd stake,  
Down almost amid the slapping waves,  
Sat the lone singer wonderful causing tears.

Whitman gives the bird's song in articulate language, forgetting himself utterly in it, so acute is his sympathy. Although he is no artist of the aesthetic school, manipulating words and aiming at conscious technical effects, he exhibits genuine phonetic skill in his handling of sonorous open vowels, hissing sibilants, and thick-studded stops. There are lines that bring to mind the slapping sound of the waves. There are broken, sobbing rhythms and sagging lines that suggest the heavy weight of dull grief. Nor do his effects of "tone color" seem artificial or studied, laid on from the outside. When the supreme effect is so memorable, the Whitmanesque mannerisms of dangling participles, long periodic sentences, and long sequences of phrases in parallel structure, to be found throughout the poem, matter little.

Soothe! soothe! soothe!  
Close on its wave soothes the wave behind,  
And again another behind, embracing the lapping, every one close,  
But my love soothes not me, not me. . . .

O throat!  
 O trembling throat!  
 Sound clearer through the atmosphere!  
 Pierce the woods, the earth,  
 Somewhere listening to catch you must be the one I want. . . .

O throat! O throbbing heart!  
 And I singing uselessly, uselessly all the night. . . .

O past! O happy life! O songs of joy!  
 In the air, in the woods, over fields,  
 Loved! loved! loved! loved! loved!  
 But my mate no more, no more with me!  
 We two together no more.

Whitman's greatest debt to his boyhood experience of listening with intense sympathy to the voice of the bird is a realization of death and of what may be put into a song. It is when death comes that life's mysteries are to be solved and our longings realized. The bird becomes his tutelary demon, the genius of his song. He traces the awakening of his own poetic impulse from his experience.

Demon or bird! (said the boy's soul)  
 Is it indeed toward your mate you sing? Or is  
     it really to me?  
 For I, that as a child, my tongue's use sleeping,  
     now I have heard you,  
 Now in a moment I know what I am for, I awake. . . .  
 A thousand warbling echoes have started within  
     me, never to die.

Death, death, death, death.  
 Which I do not forget,  
 But fuse the song of my dusky demon and brother,  
 That he sang to me in the moonlight on  
     Paumanok's gray beach,  
 With the thousand responsive songs at random,  
 My own songs awaked from that hour. . . .

In "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed" the poet introduces the voice of another bird, the hermit thrush, as a strand in his elegy. The song of the thrush, a sprig of lilac, and a sinking western star constitute the trio of themes interwoven in this poem with the main theme of the death of President Lincoln.

Whitman humanizes birds as Chaucer did long before him. But he realizes their tragedies, not merely their joys. The thoughts that

come to his mind as he listens are not of the old patterns. For him there is no false assumption of their unmitigated felicity, for which men may well envy them. No make-believe from the American poet. He faces squarely their real experiences of fear and loss and fatality.

Whitman's "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" may not have the grace and finish of earlier bird poems. It may be curious and mannered. But the genuineness of the poet's feeling for his feathered creatures accentuates the falsity of the earlier bird pieces, and in the long run it will make part of their content seem as obsolete as the treatment of Chaucer and the Elizabethans seemed to the romantic poets. In his bird poetry, too, Whitman was more in key with coming generations than with his own.

1929

## LITERARY ANTHOLOGIES AND THE BALLAD<sup>1</sup>

In these days when there is so much gathering of folksong at first hand, knowledge of it and its ways becomes more and more authentic. Many older ideas have been given up, or should be. Doubtless they linger through the weight of tradition, but some of them are very tenacious. The lyric species about which misconceptions have especially clustered is the ballad. Some years back I used to crusade, more or less, concerning what I thought fanciful romantic ballad theories, hurling back a little harder, if I could, the brickbats thrown at me for my questionings of certain assumptions. Of late years I have felt pretty sure that I would not again return to ballad controversy; I deserted it for other fields. I assumed that, in the light of present knowledge, based on research and scrutiny, no longer would dance origin be postulated for the ballad species or for the making of individual ballads; that no longer would this species—really late in development in literary history—be postulated as the parent of all poetry; that no longer would the refrain as sung by groups be insisted upon as the germ of the ballad; that no longer would one type of authorship and that peasant or “folk” authorship, with the emphasis on improvisation, be assigned to the

<sup>1</sup> Read before the Western Folklore Conference at the University of Denver, July 10, 1942.

English and Scottish traditional pieces, as though all the best of them emerged from the same type of authorship in about the same period, and that period before the Renaissance; that no longer would the coming of printing be said to have ended ballads when in reality their appearance in print preserved and gave diffusion to our best pieces. Especially, I assumed that the usual graphic account of gathered peasantry hoofing it in a ring dance and improvising lasting narratives about the upper classes as they did so would be given up.

The origin of the ballad species is really so much simpler! Why should all the old rigmarole be gone through with when English traditional ballads are presented and characterized? Why such a parade of differentiating them in origin from other songs, by assuming for them a basis of dance, refrain and improvisation? As a matter of fact we have the first ballad when the first creator of lyrics thought of adding a story element, thought of telling a story in verse; and that is about all that needs to be said of ballad origins. Further, the ballad as a species of lyric is not primitive but appears rather late in literary history. Its name, belonging earlier to the intricate artificial *ballade* of Chaucer's time, does not point to the origin of the ballad, for it was not borrowed for and restricted to narrative song till the eighteenth century.

The scholarly world has now gone beyond arm-chair theorizing, thanks to first-hand investigation and careful reporting. Yet positions that seem obsolete in the view of leading folklorists still seem very much alive in publications for schools. My contentions in this paper have to do with the literary anthologies on which the new generation is brought up. Much in the accounts given in the majority of these volumes seems to be behind the times, and, in some respects, hardly scholarly. My objections are chiefly two. The first is that they repeat in their treatment too many of the old romantic notions derived originally from eighteenth century Germany, given up long since by German scholars, never widely accepted in England, but lingering tenaciously in America, especially among those who rely on the Introduction to the Kittredge-Sargent abridgment (1904) of the great ballad collection of Professor F. J. Child. One doubts whether Professor Kittredge held the views of ballad genesis expressed in this Introduction till the end of his life. I have heard that he did not, that he thought some of the old ideas "fantastic."

Certainly neither he nor Professor Gummere, to whom, I think, he owed them, ever wrote in self-vindication when better evidence for some of their positions was called for. My harshest brickbat thrower was Professor Gordon Hall Gerould of Princeton, who spoke up for communal peasant origins and grew pretty personal when doing so. Writing of my *Poetic Origins and the Ballad*,<sup>2</sup> he termed its author "incapable of orderly thought," "dull," "confused," "unconvincing," "tactless," "showing quite abysmal lack of understanding," "her results practically worthless," "so led away by her theories as to argue the impossibility of ballad composition by European peasants." He implied too that I had no soul and no sense of beauty. Later this critic about-faced and served up in his book *The Ballad of Tradition*, 1932, most of the views he had condemned. This time his references to me were few, mostly unimportant though mostly derogatory, and in some instances wrong; but naturally I liked the book's positions.

My second contention concerns the misleading chronology of the ballad texts as they are given placement in literary anthologies, and sometimes in literary histories.

## II

Three leading anthologies now used in colleges and universities are *British Poetry and Prose*, edited by Lieder, Lovett, and Root, revised edition, 1938, *The Literature of England*, edited by Woods, Watt, and Anderson, revised edition, 1941, and the *College Survey of English Literature*, edited by B. J. Whiting, F. S. Millett, and five other excellent scholars, 1942. All are fine well planned books, abreast of the times unless for their ballad sections, and are well fitted for class use. I cite first some excerpts from *British Poetry and Prose*.

. . . But the Popular Ballads are not, in the strict sense of the word, literature at all. They were not written, but composed or improvised about some topic of popular interest to the music of a popular tune, and often accompanied by the dance. Once started on their way, they passed from generation to generation only by oral tradition. . . . Though the creation and possession of humble peasant folk, the ballads concern themselves with the fortunes of lords and ladies and gentlefolk. . . .

Will it do to state as an established fact that the English and Scottish ballads were not "written" but "improvised"? They came

<sup>2</sup> *The Literary Review*, March 8, 1921.

from authors having knowledge of rhyme and stanza form, and probably the original texts had meter too. Those who hold that the lyrics to which these introductory remarks are prefixed were improvised can know little of folk-improvisation, its quality and its transiency. To support their stand they should be able to bring forward a large body of narrative songs of high quality so arising. Instead, not a single story-song deserving place alongside those included in the illustrative sections of school anthologies has ever been proved to have so sprung up. Numerous folk-improvisations are to be gathered and examined; but what is to be said of their lyric quality, and the likelihood of their achieving permanence? How many books still state improvisation of the English and Scottish ballads as an unquestioned fact. But the improvisation, preservation and diffusion of narrative songs showing rhyme, stanzaic form, and widening currency has never really been demonstrated.

When gathered humble folk do compose, they compose about themselves and their near interests, not about the lives and experiences of lords and ladies and gentlefolk. Tales of fairies and supernatural beings interested higher circles in the later Middle Ages. They were the topics in Elizabethan days of Spenser's *Faerie Queene* and of Shakespeare and the dramatists, not those of peasant improvisers. The peasantry might like to hear songs of knights and ladies and courtly life; but they were no more likely to compose about them than the Southwestern cowboys are to make songs about the personal lives of cattle or oil magnates, or the loggers of the Northern woods about the occupants of the Diamond Horseshoe of the Metropolitan Opera House.

In a second lyric anthology, *The Literature of England*, under the sub-head "The Literature of the Common People," the display of ballads follows "The Fox and the Wolf," composed about the middle of the thirteenth century, and precedes "The Second Shepherd's Play" of the border of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. A few passages may be cited.

. . . The process of ballad making is many centuries old, and may take place at any time in any nation where a state of imaginative illiteracy exists. . . . Most of the Robin Hood ballads, for example, exist in a text well past 1500. And yet *Piers Plowman*, written in the last half of the fourteenth century, makes a reference to the "rimes of Robin Hood" so casual that it is possible to assume the currency of the Robin Hood ballads long before 1350.



For one thing, can one concede a state of "imaginative illiteracy" for the creation of narrative songs with well-told plots? Songs, or fragments of songs, are so created; but they are neither lasting nor well presented, nor couched in rhymed stanzaic form, unless they are merely adaptations of something that already has established currency. The creation of songs of the story type, told dramatically, not by allusion, requires skill. As for the fourteenth century "rimes of Robin Hood," how do we know that these pieces were ballads? More likely they preceded, or resembled, the long epic-lyric texts of the earliest Robin Hood pieces preserved for us, those coming from the end of the next century. It is not safe to assume that *rime* in the fourteenth century meant ballad. Recall Chaucer's words in the Prologue to *Sir Thopas*: His "rym" is a metrical romance.

"Hoost," quod I, ne beth not yvele apayd,  
For oother tale certes kan I noon,  
But of a rym lerned long agoon."

A passage from the Prologue to the *Cursor Mundi* of about 1300 has:

Man yernes rimes for to here,  
And romans red on maneres sere:  
Of Alisaunder the conquerour,  
Of July Cesar the emparour. . . .

Succeeding lines name among popular "rimes" and "romans," those of the "strange striif" of Greece and Troy, Brut, King Arthour, Wawan, Cai, King Charles and Rauland, Tristan and his leif Ysote, Joneck, Ysumbrase, Ydoine, Amadase. These "rimes" also were not ballads but metrical romances. Further, neither the author of *Piers Plowman* nor his character, Sloth, who knows of Robin Hood, is a peasant. And rhymes of Robin Hood and the noble, Randolph, Earl of Chester, are placed by Sloth in the same category:

I cannot perfectly my paternoster, as the priest it singeth,  
But I can rhymes of Robin Hood and Randolph, Earl of Chester.

These rhymes were known, then, to an educated man, Langland, and they may or may not have been known to the illiterate peasantry. One meets continually the statement that the reference to the rhymes of Robin Hood proves the popularity of folk ballads in the fourteenth century. Really this proof is questionable. There is a clerical approximation to a ballad, the *Judas*, in the thirteenth century. Ballads were undoubtedly on their way then. From the

fourteenth century no unmistakable ballad text has come down to us, although lyrics of many related types exist, from this and the next hundred years.

To cite further excerpts from *The Literature of England*:

. . . Three main schools of thought have emerged: (1) the ballads were composed by individual authors; (2) the ballads were composed by a community as a whole (communal authorship); (3) the ballads were composed by an individual making, as Professor Kittredge so aptly observes, "an improvisation in the presence of a sympathetic company which may even at times, participate in the process." . . . The folk-ballad [is] much the older type. . . . One or more individuals could have composed the narrative portions and even acted out the story, while the community group, assembled for some special occasion, could have roared out the refrain. Knowing as we do that improvisation was not regarded as out of the ordinary on the part of any intelligent person of earlier times, we may well accept the theory that several members had a hand in the composition of the main body of the folk-ballad. . . . Because the ballad was the unwritten product of peasant and commoner, it was not considered highly by scholars and critics of literature until the interest in antiquities that was a feature of the later eighteenth century. . . .

The customary distinction is made between the "minstrel ballads" so called, and "folk-ballads," an example cited for the latter being "Edward" in its eighteenth-century literary text.

Here again, in this anthology, we find emphasized the mentally homogeneous throng, creating its own songs in public. Here again is the assumption that the composition of ballads was dependent on the gathered folk group. And again the refrain is in the foreground as a fundamental feature. Professor John Robert Moore of the University of Indiana, when canvassing the body of the English and Scottish traditional ballads for light on their structural iteration,<sup>8</sup> found that refrains and choral repetitions are more necessary to other kinds of mediaeval lyrics than they are to ballads. He doubts the basic character of their occasional technique of repetition. "Unfortunately . . . the facts seem to make little provision for the theory [i.e., of incremental repetition as fundamental to the ballad structure]; for it is the simple ballads which most often have fixed refrains and the broadsides which exhibit the most marked use of incremental repetition. Furthermore, when oral tradition adds a refrain to an original printed broadside, it is only a simple refrain, and not that structural device of accretion which Professor Gum-

<sup>8</sup> "The Influence of Transmission on the English Ballads," *Modern Language Review*, XI (1916), 398.

mere considers so characteristic." Professor Child's later ballad-texts show refrains oftener than do the earlier. A ballad can be a ballad without the presence of choral repetition, or structural repetition, or a refrain. Positive statements concerning the participation of the folk in creating ballads, this by developing them from structural repetition or from refrains, are not borne out by the evidence.

As regards the familiar hypothesis of isolated rural folk creating their own ballads, it should be said that pieces that last and find oral diffusion do not seem to emerge from groups on social occasions. It is striking, for instance, that dwellers in the Southern Appalachians still sing pieces brought over from the Old World long ago; they seem to have no body of folksong of their own creation. The bulk of the cowboy songs, those that tell a story and have memorable quality, are not cowboy products but rather entered from the outside; they are older pieces adapted to local conditions and characters. In general, I believe, there should be less emphasis on the "illiterate," even as regards ballad preservation. The tradition of song may be preserved among literate folk too, and from them come unquestionably the best texts.

Passing next to the *College Survey of English Literature*, a fine and finely edited book, newly published, one reads: "The man can hardly be accused of overstatement who says that the popular, or traditional ballads, have had a universality of appeal granted to almost no other literary type." In this statement, I believe, the word "song" or "lyric" should be substituted for "ballad." There is no striking body of narrative song in France or Italy of the later Middle Ages, as there is in Denmark and England, though lyrics are abundant enough in these countries. And in England and America popular songs in general far outnumber ballads, though they have been less vigilantly collected. A later sentence tells again that ballads are "created by, or close to the common people—the folk, as students of their lore find it convenient to term them." The account then proceeds to place the usual emphasis on the refrain which suggests choral singing of what is often called in this connection the "dancing throng." This reiterated emphasis on the dance derives, I suppose, from the etymology of the word, from the late Latin *ballare*, to dance. Chaucer's intricate courtly *ballades* were dance songs but not ballads. Since the name, as I have already said, was not restricted to narrative songs till the day of Joseph Ritson in the

eighteenth century, it can hardly be argued from concerning the origin of the story-song species to which it was belatedly applied. Professor Kittredge is usually credited in anthologies with the definition of ballad as a narrative song. The definition should be traced back to Joseph Ritson.

Finally in this anthology comes the stock picture of ballad creation which one hoped was by this time obsolete.

. . . "We may believe that groups of men and women, all with essentially the same background and outlook, got in the habit of accompanying their simple dances with simple melodies to which, as they danced, they extemporized simple narrative songs, with more than one of the dancers taking part in the composition of the words . . . the theory that postulates a dancing, singing, extemporizing, homogeneous group . . . will account for most of the characteristics which we associate with the popular ballad."

We might try to imagine our present popular square dance groups extemporizing as they danced (if unlettered) story songs of fair length, and remembering them; or extemporizing refrain songs that later take on plots, and find diffusion.

### III

Mediaeval folk-throngs may have evolved refrains and refrain songs as they danced, but, if so, to these may better be traced other lyric types than the ballad. There were homogeneous extemporizing throngs in our First World War and we still have with us their most permanent product, a typical song that should fairly be taken into account. But it never was and never will be a ballad, unless some skilful person should sometime take it up, provide it with a taking story, and find some way of giving his version currency. I refer to "Mademoiselle d'Armentières." The emergence of "Hinky Dinky Parlezvous" was from oral sources. New stanzas were continually improvised; but it never developed a plot, never developed unity of any type other than that arising from the persistence of the borrowed tune to which the words were sung.

Now the English and Scottish ballads are not Hinky-Dinkys. Each tells a vivid story and the variants of each ballad are recognizable variants of that story. Though improvisations of singing soldiers were frequent in the War of 1914-1919, there is no instance of their improvisations developing into song-narratives. Folk improvisations are generally satires or lampoons, simple and structureless, and not a very important or durable type of lyric. The im-

provisations of Negroes at religious gatherings, of whites at the old-time camp meetings, or of singing students, illustrate this. I have a report on the improvisations of the so-called Hunger Marchers, taken down in Washington in the early 1930's by Dr. Joseph Jones of the University of Texas. No one anywhere has brought forward a body of improvisations evolving, through any kind of process, story form, high lyric quality, and lasting diffusion. How often when some one improvises a few simple lines, or perhaps a stanza or two, or adds a little to something sung by others, we are told that this is proof of group origin for that distinctive and much higher lyric type, the English traditional ballad. A permanent text from gathered illiterates, the result of improvisation, or representing in any valid sense some community, is never achieved. And, if it were, it would hardly get itself known outside that community. Individual singers modify the songs they know, songs in oral tradition. That is about as far as we should go. With no shorthand reporter present to preserve the improvisations and the singers themselves illiterate, unable to write down their impromptu contributions, how would a resulting song, whether narrative or not, get itself preserved to be handed on? There are many instances of individuals with remarkable memories for song-texts; but group memory of a spontaneous group product is another thing.

The belief that the pattern or technique of the English and Scottish ballads derives from a pattern set in remote times by a singing and dancing throng, improvising communally, seems to be held by the editors of the three anthologies from which I have quoted, all three late books and all widely used. Why hand this belief on to learners? The salient situations, repetitions and commonplaces of style, which are the features traced to prehistoric times, need no such prehistoric derivations; or, if they do, the same source should be set forth, with more emphasis, for other types of lyrics. They are not fundamental differentiae of the ballad. They are to be accounted for in the same way as for other lyric species, not termed ballads, that exhibit them. The songs of primitive improvising throngs and the ballads appearing rather late in literary history do not belong in the same framework. Taken down in a straight line to modern times the songs of primitive groups bring us on the improvisation side to modern folk-improvisations like those of singing soldiers. Taken down on the movement side, they bring us to ring dance or movement or game songs (such, for instance, as "Ring

Round Rosy") in which the refrain is the essential feature. But neither of these varieties of folksong is identical with the story-song or ballad; and neither develops into the ballad.<sup>4</sup>

Religious songs, labor songs, student songs, game songs, choral songs, dialogue songs, play-party songs, antiphonal songs, deserve to be taken back to primitive group-creation more than does the ballad. Lyric-epics, story-songs, or ballads proper, appeared after the Norman Conquest and the Crusades, and the species was not at its height in England earlier than the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Professor F. J. Child exhibited characteristic soundness of judgment when he preferred the terms "popular" and "traditional" for the ballads he collected, and when he remarked in his article on ballads in *Johnson's Cyclopaedia* that "the ballad is not originally the product or the property of the people."

How long will the assumption of the improvisation of the story-song persist, despite its psychological improbability, or rather impossibility? An improvising singer can hardly himself remember what he volunteered. How could a gathered throng remember its collective product? And, granting that it could, what would give diffusion to the lyric creation of a static peasant group? The peasant groups of mediaeval days were static groups. Professional singers were itinerant; and the songs of professional singers, whether these authors were itinerant or not, were those having a chance for diffusion.

#### IV

Not all anthologies take the old attitudes. Here is an account from *Century Readings in English Literature* (revised edition, 1940) by Cunliffe, Young, and Van Doren.

A long accepted theory was that ballads originated in a naïve and homogeneous folk-community and could fairly be regarded as the work not of any single person but of the community. Such compositions were thought of as beginning in a choral throng, in which one person after another contributed an improvised verse, couplet, or short stanza to a gradually increasing story. Under such conditions the story would be regarded as growing by "incremental repetition"; that is, in making his contribution each singer in turn would repeat a part of the preceding utterance and add to the story a new detail of his own. The successive singers would then disappear, leaving a simple narrative poem belonging to the whole community. This theory of

<sup>4</sup> See my "The Term 'Communal'," *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, XXXIX, 1929.

"communal authorship" is no longer widely held. It is clearly more probable that most ballads were originally composed by individual singers. In the process of oral transmission, however, from person to person, a particular ballad often underwent modification of content and expression from unidentified reciters.

The late Lord Tweedmuir (Sir John Buchan) reflected the position of British scholars in his *History of English Literature*, 1927. I cite a summarized statement from the shortened edition of 1937.

. . . The ballads in their existing form belong to a comparatively late age, and were the work of popular minstrels who were the successors of the old skalds and gleemen, and worked on a literary tradition which represented the breakdown of the older tradition of the romance or fabliau . . . Art—and the ballads are often great art—does not come into being from popular excitement but from the inspiration of a particular gifted individual; it cannot be syndicated and socialized.

The following is from the Foreword, by Archibald MacLeish, to John A., and Alan Lomax's *Our Singing Country*.

Devoted writers write as though the body of the people of a country made songs for themselves and poems for themselves—the "folksongs" and the "folk-music." But to speak prosaically the people do not make songs and poems for themselves. The folk songs and the folk poems come from far back and, like any song or any poem, they have had beginnings in a single mind. What the people of a country do with the music they take over for themselves and the poems they take over for themselves is to pass them along from hand to hand, from mouth to mouth, from one generation to the next, until they wear smooth in the shape the people—this particular people—is obliged to give them.

## V

My second protest is that present anthologies exhibit singular negligence of chronological considerations in the array of ballad texts they place as illustrative in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The same run of selections appears in nearly all books. They are entered, I suppose, for their lyrical quality; and they often illustrate far better eighteenth-century Scottish folksong than they do that of the late Middle Ages. The characteristics of style blandly assumed to arise from the "superiority of peasant creation" over that of "art" are exemplified in them. Yet there is no evidence that the majority of them really emerge from the fourteenth or fifteenth century.

The usual list includes, to cite instances, "Johnny Armstrong," "Mary Hamilton," "Barbara Allen," "The Wife of Usher's Well,"

"The Two Corbies," "Lord Randal," "Edward," "Sir Patrick Spens." These are presented together in the Age of Chaucer, or the preceding or following century, and as though no discrimination need be made among them as regards shifts in style or subject, or period of emergence. The events chronicled in "Johnny Armstrong" took place, according to Professor Child's investigations, in 1530. The ballad might, then, have been composed in the sixteenth, seventeenth, or eighteenth century; it could not have been composed before the events it narrates happened. Some anthologies have placed it in the Age of Chaucer, others in the fifteenth century. The earliest existent text of it was printed in 1658, i.e., in the seventeenth century, and its outlaw hero lived in the first half of the sixteenth century. It cannot be a Middle English piece. As for "Mary Hamilton," why do editors give this ballad also fifteenth century placement, when the events of which it tells belonged in the reign of Mary Stuart? Mary Hamilton was one of the hand-maids of Mary Queen of Scots. The ballad seems to have taken its story from an incident of 1563 at Mary's court. The texts of "Mary Hamilton" are Scottish and were recovered in the early nineteenth century. Why place this ballad before the Renaissance?

"Barbara Allen's Cruelty" was first heard of as the Scotch song of a London actress, as recorded by the seventeenth-century diarist Samuel Pepys. Basic for its theme is the old courtly lyric tradition of death for love of an unresponsive lady. A hundred years later Goldsmith heard it sung by a dairy maid, the natural fate of a London success of the preceding century. One recalls how at present many nineteenth century stage songs, long forgotten in cities, may be recovered in remote places. The theme of "Barbara Allen" is hardly a folk-theme; yet this piece also is placed far earlier than is justified by the evidence.

"The Wife of Usher's Well," in Sir Walter Scott's text, is a perennial favorite. Scott, as well known, was a skilled balladist who touched up or helped out his traditionally recovered texts. His version of the ballad differs markedly from other texts of it, especially the American texts, which sometimes retain earlier features of the Child ballads than do those surviving at the present time in the Old World. Scott's very poetic text is so superior as to bring it into question. It has the ring of eighteenth-century Scotch folksong. Why select it to represent for students fifteenth-century lyric narrative? "The Two Corbies" is another of Scott's texts, and it too



sounds like Scott and the Scotch folksong of the eighteenth century. If this lyric is to be placed before the Renaissance, it would seem more valid to select the seventeenth-century text, "The Three Ravens," from the lyric anthology *Melismata* of 1611. To reprint the latter would be more scholarly than to go to Scott's *Minstrelsy* of 1802. Scott's text is of high lyrical quality; but the Elizabethan song, like most Elizabethan songs, is attractive too. Might not a sixteenth or seventeenth century text more fairly represent the late Middle Ages than one from the border of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, coming from a skilled poet and balladist?

Much the same protest may be made concerning "Edward." This piece, which exhibits extraordinarily perfect art, seems always to be placed early by anthologists, perhaps because of the formerly held theory that "situation songs" represent a very early type. Bishop Percy's version (1765) is that invariably selected and generalized from concerning ballad origins. Percy's version is a quite isolated one, composed in literary Scotch of the eighteenth century and so hardly suitable for illustrating origins, or for placement in the late Middle Ages. Professor Archer Taylor has pointed out that the many other texts of this song that have been recovered are not debased versions of Percy's text.<sup>5</sup> Percy's is probably the manipulated one, and manipulated by a skilful hand, perhaps for dramatic or platform delivery. In any case, the literary Scotch version does not belong early in ballad history and should certainly not be taken to exemplify origins. Yet it is almost invariably held up as a "folk-ballad" *par excellence*, as over against an "art" or "minstrel" ballad. Nor may "Lord Randal" belong before the Renaissance. Sir Walter Scott's version of this is one of the older English texts. We have our first knowledge of this piece, a poison ballad, as belonging to the repertory of an Italian professional singer at Verona in the seventeenth century. That it existed in England in the fifteenth century or earlier seems extremely unlikely. It probably entered from Italy, whence at a later time many entertainers were imported; yet it and "Edward" are invariably argued from as representing the primitive ballad type.

To cite one more illustration,<sup>6</sup> of "Sir Patrick Spens" we know

<sup>5</sup> *Modern Language Notes*, April, 1930. Professor Taylor has also a book on this ballad. Chicago University Press, 1931.

<sup>6</sup> For further instances, see my "On the Dating of the English and Scottish Ballads," *PMLA*, XLVII, March, 1932.

nothing before Percy's *Reliques* of 1765. It too is in the Scotch folksong style. The events recounted in it have never been positively identified. Have we the right to associate Percy's text with mediaeval composition? Even if the incident narrated were ancient, the composition of a lyric contemporary with the event it celebrates may not certainly be assumed. Drayton's "Battle of Agincourt" of 1605 celebrates an event of 1415. Our best poem about John Brown comes not from the mid-nineteenth century but from the twentieth.

## VI

The fifteenth century is a meager period for literary historians, and Malory and the ballads lend it its main interest. It is convenient, I suppose, to give them space there rather than in the crowded sixteenth or eighteenth centuries. But the validity of the practice should be questioned. The English ballad type was surely emerging then; but students should not be led to believe that ballads flourished luxuriantly in this century; and the texts utilized for illustration should be confined to those that with some probability may be placed as late mediaeval. Many lyrics, mainly clerical with strong ballad resemblances or affiliations though they have no clear plots, remain from the fifteenth century, and these do give a good idea of its types of song. In general, I think the date of the production of the mass of the Child ballads should be moved forward to later centuries. Their heyday came during or after the Renaissance.

The typical ballads that writers on the subject and makers of anthologies recall when admiring the spirited quality of the English ballads, their lyrical appeal and the characteristics of their style, (ballads are really composed in many styles) are likely to be selected texts touched up by Sir Walter Scott, or printed by some of the great Scottish collectors who specialized in the best ballads they could find. It is partly, too, because of this specialization on the part of the collectors of a century ago, and because of our formulation of our ideas from the Scotch ballad style, descending from the superior Scottish song of the fifteenth century, that we have so exalted an idea of the quality of English traditional song as a whole. Weak and crude texts existed of course alongside the poetical ones; but no one collected and preserved them. The gatherers of our twentieth century preserve whatever they find, good and bad. The great collectors of nineteenth century Scotland preserved the best they could find and neglected the rest.

Once more, my purpose in this paper has been to express regret that the accounts of the English ballad species that are presented to students and teachers in contemporary anthologies are not abreast of the times; and to protest against the ignoring of chronological considerations in the selection of individual ballad texts for period placement.

*1942*

## THE FUTURE OF POETRY

Poetry has often been called the most beautiful form of human speech. The human race has always had its song and it always will have. But its old preeminence as a form of literary expression, written or oral, has lapsed. Today it has relatively fewer hearers or readers than in the long stretches of the past, and there are fewer noted poets. The old enthusiasm for it has been pretty much relegated to academic circles. Poetry societies are fostered on college campuses and one hopes they will continue to be. Prizes are offered to encourage young poets and avenues of publication are afforded them in local and other publications. There are results but they are slight. On the whole there is faint promise that poetry will regain its former leading place. Why is this? What has happened that after so many centuries of ascendancy its prestige has waned? There is much discussion of the subject in literary journals. Various explanations are given by various critics. One can concede the points they make, or most of them. Yet I find myself disagreeing as to the main cause or causes assigned. My explanation of the decline of poetry in our day is different still.

### I

Among the explanations that I recall at random is that of a scholar who believes that the poetic decline of recent times is more

or less bound up with the waning of humanistic studies, especially classical studies. A more conspicuous school of thought attributes the "epitaph of poetry" to the rise of science, finding the poetic and the scientific spirits incompatible, as the young Keats did when he proposed his famous toast, "Confusion to the memory of Sir Isaac Newton, who destroyed the poetry of the rainbow by reducing it to a prism," or Poe when he wrote his sonnet "To Science." A world given over to scientific investigation, to invention and machines, a world devoted to the cult of the realistic in literature and of sociological and political theory is not stimulating to poetic creativeness. This was not the view of Matthew Arnold, who thought that as science came to the foreground poetry would be needed more and more as an offset, would perhaps be relied upon to replace religion. And it was not the view of Tennyson, who loved to introduce scientific conceptions and illustrations into the fabric of his poetry.

Another thinker, a political conservative, ascribed the shift from poetry to our recent dominant concern for the proletarian. How well, he asked, do proletarianism and poetry mix? The proletarian spirit is no more likely, is even less likely, to inspire beautiful literature than is the spirit of science and the worship of the machine.

There is something to think about in two explanations made in 1937 by H. S. Canby in the *Saturday Review of Literature*. Mr. Canby does not think the decay of poetry is for Carlyle's reason—that poetry belongs to the childhood of the race and inevitably declines with sophistication. Nor does he hold that we are losing as a people our sense of rhythm. We still dance and like music; indeed, is this not an age of swingtime? Nor is it because of the neglect of the reading and teaching of verse in the lower schools and the colleges. Mr. Canby suggested that poetry is suffering from that widespread specialization which has affected so many other activities—the division of labor, specialization in sport, in education, in manual training. Only the classicists read the classics, only scientists collect specimens, only linguists perfect themselves in foreign languages, only scholars form libraries. Only professionals have been expected to make music or paint. Do only poets read poetry? In a further comment Mr. Canby emphasizes the possible maladjustment between poetry and our own era. In a time of emotional confusion when we are in doubt of the stability of our

own civilization, in such a time poetry can hardly be articulate for the general reader. It follows old emotional and thought patterns, expresses only those which have become conventions; it attracts no more than does good prose. Good prose is not merely easier reading (it was not once), but it is better reading than poetry which is not real poetry but only acceptable verse.

To continue a brief sampling of contemporary views, in an article, "America and Poetry," also in the *Saturday Review of Literature*, Leonard Bacon implied that the thinner quality of American poetry after 1890 is in part the cause of present conditions. This falling-off in quality came, he thinks, from a wish to imitate European cultural ways, from too great concern for form and diction so that an artificial, sissified performance was turned out, in which there was nothing for the general human being. The vogue of Imagism *et al.* followed and the present-day vogue of the unintelligible. These later vogues of poetry have to do with method and form; but method and form are not what is of first importance. And true pleasure, said Mr. Bacon, is a solitary performance, whereas the solitary in our contemporary life gives way to the noisy and the social, to group pleasure. The new psychologists think us abnormal if we take our pleasure by ourselves. One might add that many now go in for the "choral reading" of poetry, though it is really only the lone reader who reads it best. He points out further that poetry is a very human art, and it is its duty to be beautiful. But our age is afraid of the beautiful. Mr. Bacon is sure that this condition is not permanent. He is surer than I find myself to be that poetry will return to its old ascendance.

The obscurity and symbolism often affected by present-day poets also comes in for blame or for protest. Among those who believe that present tendencies contribute little to true poetry and limit the number of its readers is Elizabeth Drew. Too much allusiveness, the substitution of psychological process for logical structure and sequence, capricious use of widely divergent associations when, as so often, the central idea of the poem is stated nowhere in the poem—all this robs poetry of appeal. The cult of obscurity alienates readers. When poetry is not emotionally comprehensible except to the highly trained, it cannot keep its hold on the public. It may be left, as Mr. Canby suggested, to specialists and to the library. Though our age is widely read, the sensitiveness, the subtle emo-

tional responsiveness that poetry needs, is lacking. A sense of its universal values has faded.

These various diagnoses do not seem to me to be the whole story or even the main story. Surely there is a practical, realistic factor to be taken into account, though it may well have been overlooked by theorists and idealists.

## II

First let us take a look at poetry in panorama, for the part it has played down the generations; this before we turn to the present to try to understand or predict. Whether or not we are as confident as are Mr. Bacon and many others who write on the subject that poetry has a bright future, it certainly has had a past, a long one that takes us backward down vast stretches of time to the beginnings of the human race. For that matter linguists have suggested, especially Professor Otto Jespersen of Copenhagen, that the beginnings of language itself, the means of human intercommunication, may be found in musical utterance. All speech may once have been song; the two phenomena, speech and song, not yet differentiated; speech not yet evolved. Among aboriginal tribes today speech is more emotional, and melody counts for more than among us. Uncivilized utterance is highly musical. Whether it is true or not—and there are numerous other theories concerning the origin of language—it is a fascinating hypothesis that from the first outbursts of primitive music and song, i.e., from primitive poetry, comes our first human speech. When we pass to literary records, here also poetical language seems older than prose expression. The often-quoted eighteenth-century poet may have been right when he wrote:

Thus nature drove us; warbling rose  
Man's voice in verse before he spoke in prose.

I have dwelt on the genesis of poetry, possibly coincident with the genesis of language, to illustrate the remoteness of its past and its fundamental importance in the history of the race.

Next, in this brief retrospect, let us continue to glance at the panorama of poetry, its place and prestige, between ancient days and the present. Poetry, meant to be heard, was still the leading form of literary expression in Greek and Roman days, as in primitive times. The fundamentally oral quality of poetry must not be

forgotten. Among the early Germans, professional bards were in the foreground. They were the preservers of tribal history. They chanted of the deeds of heroic ancestors and of heroic fights of their own times. Before the days of writing and manuscripts, this was the only way in which tradition could be handed on. Verse was more easily remembered than prose, and perhaps for this reason it seems to have earlier acquired clear and attractive structure. In Chaucer's time, the late Middle Ages, tales were still chanted to the accompaniment of some musical instrument or read aloud before a group of hearers. Poetry was still the dominant art form. It maintained its ascendance in the sixteenth century, a great poetic period, and it was still directed mainly to the ear. Drama was then in poetic form. Shakespeare composed his plays to be presented, to be heard, not for circulation in printed form. And nearly any character in a Shakespearean play may catch up a musical instrument and sing. Song seems to have had nearly universal popularity then. Though there was more reading and less hearing of it in the seventeenth century, it was still, two centuries after the introduction of printing, the form of literature that reached most persons, that attracted geniuses, the strong minds that craved readers and influence as well as self-expression. Poetry was still the form that brought prestige, and, for the dramatists, remuneration. The latter may not have been great; but other forms of literature hardly brought returns at all.

Thus we have come as far down as the eighteenth century and find poetry having a relative monopoly, less than it had earlier, but still unmistakably in the foreground. The outpourings of verse have been the key not only to the emotional but to the intellectual tendencies, the moral development, the psychic outlook of people, down nearly to our own time—poetry far more than prose. The significant period for shift was the eighteenth century. By this time the middle class had risen in influence. The reading public was enlarged and reading popularized. Not only the upper classes read, but the rising currency of newspapers, pamphlets, periodicals, and printed street ballads brought reading to those farther down in social station. Of especial importance in this century was the advent of the periodical essay in prose and of prose fiction, native English forms. The vogue of these new forms, the essay and the novel, attracted strong writers. We wait, however, until the early nineteenth century and Sir Walter Scott and his invention



of the historical novel, for the appearance of works like his *Ivanhoe*, *Kenilworth*, *The Talisman*, for fiction reading to become thoroughly respectable. This seems to me to be the historic turning-point in the position of poetry. I want to emphasize this. It was Sir Walter Scott who really broke the monopoly of poetry, who ultimately wrote away its popularity when he turned from the verse romance to fiction. More than anyone else he has the historic position of the author who diminished its sales and so helped to dislodge it from its ascendance.

Literary anthologies give first place to poetry through the nineteenth century. Those of the twentieth century give more and more space relatively to prose. The impetus of centuries carried verse fairly well through the Victorian period; but by that time its dominance was clearly waning. It was losing to the multifarious prose that had developed so slowly as a competitor. It has lost ground to the novel, the essay, to histories like those of Carlyle and Macaulay, written under the influence of Scott. Serious stage plays were composed in prose. And now we must take into account, too, the sketches and biographies and autobiographies and travel-books and the miscellaneous political and sociological matter that our presses pour forth in floods. The Victorian poets were the last to have great place, and even their poetry, in the perspective of the present, seems to shrink somewhat in depth and significance when placed beside the creations of the trail-blazing minds that composed *Oliver Twist*, *Vanity Fair*, *The Mill on the Floss*, *The Egoist*, *The Return of the Native*, in England, and, on the Continent, *Ghosts*, *The Doll's House*, *La Débâcle*, *Die Weber*, *Resurrection*. The profounder and truer vein in the last half of the century ran, not through its poetry as in the earlier half, but through its prose.

Authors with much to say and on deep problems chose at long last the medium of prose expression. They wanted many readers. There is no decline in the supply of poems; but fewer persons turn to them for what they read. Poetry societies and small poetical publications multiply. Poetry holds its academic standing. Teachers bring up their pupils on it, as they should, for it is an appealing form of verbal expression. It is, as we have seen, a fundamental form in literary history. But so far as demand for its production goes it is moribund. "Everybody knows that poetry is a dying art," wrote one publisher. "Everybody in the book and literary business,

that is. The news has not yet spread to the masses." It is only newspaper poets, such as the late Walt Mason or Edgar Guest, or columnists trying it for variety's sake, or writers of light verse for periodicals, that command much of a market. Or perhaps the chief market at present is that of those who produce the incredible stanzas crooned by radio performers, in which there are two staple characters, the moonstruck singer and his or her no less moonstruck "honey," both moaners. But this is not poetry, though it may command payment. It is not even verse.

I remember once writing a sophomoric piece that I entitled "The Literary Interregnum," in which I tried to point out that there are usually "between periods," or periods of transition, in which the literary product is weak and uncertain. Old themes and patterns are dying and the new is not yet born. My reference was mainly to poetry. The nineteenth-century poets had passed and their successors had not yet come to the foreground. But I felt pretty sure of the future and of my word "interregnum." I was sure that it would end and that new literary kings would be crowned. They will be, of course, but they seem more likely to be kings of prose than kings of verse. Are we to have in our century the major poets to whom Whitman so looked forward?

Poets to come! orators, singers, musicians to come!

Not today is to justify me and answer what I am for,

But you, a new brood, native, athletic, continental, greater than before known,  
Arouse, for you must justify me.

In the past, disastrous war periods have often proved greatly stimulating to poets and have been followed by notable poetic performance. In our present war period there may seem to be a distinct popular turning to poetry. Some have thought that there is. But how likely is the product to be greater or more lasting than that hailed as significant during the first World War?

### III

What I wish to suggest as the major reason for the lesser role played by poetry in our day is the economic reason, the lack of rewards, the weakening of the old motives for turning to it, the undermining effect of competition. Disconcerting as this may seem, the practical or economic motive is a fundamental thing, to be taken into account in literary history as elsewhere in our world

of human beings. It is recognition of this motive that has made me lose much of my former faith in an "interregnum" to be followed by a new glorious florescence time for poetry. In any line of human activity the practical side is important. Economic explanations underlie many if not most of the significant phenomena of human history. Whether we are dealing with politics, intellectual activities, even religion, such phenomena have in part an economic basis; economic considerations are of fundamental importance for their future. This is not to be overemphasized, of course, but the economic factor holds for art, too. Economic conditions must be favorable if there is to be high development. Indeed, unidealistic as this may seem, it is the vogues they foster that make possible high development. They, combined with the right element in time. Shakespeare could have been the dramatist he was only at the time when he wrote. Fifty years before, the drama had not yet developed nor the possibilities of blank verse. Not long after his death the Puritans closed the theaters, and no plays were presented. Milton, too, would not have written on the themes he chose, nor in the poetical modes in which he so excelled, had he written a few decades later, when Renaissance poetic ideas had been superseded by newer and more prosaic ones.

We have seen how, for so long a time, poetry had a relative monopoly in the literary field. And we have seen, too, whether we like to confront the fact or not, how it is affected by economic returns. Why do geniuses write? What impels them? They hope for fame, prestige, and for concrete reward for attaining it; or they have certain aims to achieve, to set forth their ideas, or they crave self-expression. That self-expression usually takes the literary form that finds most readers or brings surest rewards. We turn our endeavors into the lines that bring these, or we are never heard from. A potential super-football player born, living, and dying in Alaska could hardly attain All-American recognition. Nor a potential great writer growing up and remaining in a region where there is little culture and books are not encouraged. Men's wish to better themselves and to achieve security is the surest impetus to effort. When Shakespeare wrote, the poetic drama was the only form of literature that brought economic returns. He was a good businessman, too, and his acting and playwriting brought him economic prosperity. Had Dr. Johnson, Goldsmith, or Thackeray had private incomes, they would probably never have written much,

or, in any case, not written what they did. When they wrote, they turned their compositions into the forms having vogue and claiming readers. When novels rose to popularity, when it was they that brought fame and money and commanded most readers, strong minds began to turn to them and to cease composing lyrics and verse romances and verse dramas. And of late years the demand for magazine literature still directs activity into the kaleidoscopically varied though sometimes slight forms that these magazines endeavor to supply. My idea is, then, that poetry lost place as it had the competition of attractive prose, the latter bringing greater rewards. In a recent article Professor George R. Stewart dates the decline of poetry in quality after 1890 and points to its complete surrender to the novel since 1920. I go further back by more than a hundred years for the beginnings of the shift.

And now poetry has other competitors to lure the strongest talent and tempt the ambitious. The new forms of art—the films and the radio—are forms for which the texts are perishable, as merely oral literature always is; and the fame they yield is transient. Yet they are formidable rivals and their economic returns unmistakable. Authors of both fiction and drama now often direct their works toward recognition in these fields. What chance has poetry in competition with them? They reach millions where printed volumes of verse reach fewer and fewer. Why, then, writers may well say, bother with verse? Instead of the lasting utterances of great poets, addressed to readers of intelligence, typical in our day is the flat matter so often blatted out by the mooncalf singers of the radio. Curiously, our sophisticated twentieth century tolerates rhymed or semi-rhymed verse that could not be paralleled in preceding centuries. In the 1890's people used to think "After the Ball" or "Heaven Will Protect the Working Girl" pretty weak stuff; but these pieces were lengths ahead, in thought, content, narrative, and expression, of various lyrics now turned out. I refer to matter like "Mamie, O Mamie, don't you feel ashamy?" "There ain't no maybe in my baby's eyes," "O how I love Dolores. Does she love me? Of cou-rse." Sometimes there are genuine poetic successes, like Archibald MacLeish's "The Fall of the City" and Maxwell Anderson's poetical dramas. Radio drama in verse may be the beginning of something, a significant pioneer venture that restores somewhat of his old role, appeal to the ear, to the poet.

But, after all, such drama can reach only the special not the general, in any case not the "proletarian," audiences of these days.

I know I have not drawn a roseate picture. I hope it is an untrue one. "If we lose poetry from ordinary life," wrote a critic, "we lose the dignity and power of the word, the moving eloquence of its cadences, the exaltation of language and emotion which transcend our daily realities and lift us into a higher world of the spirit." When verse comes to be used for fewer and more special purposes, when it comes to serve academic purposes mainly, it falls into relative disuse.

As I said at the opening, poetry is the most beautiful form of human speech. That it will not die out I am sure. The language has rich potentialities. People will always wish to put words together musically, to give pleasure to themselves or their hearers, or merely to explore the possibilities of the language. Poetry surely has a future, both for the expression of ideas and emotions and for musical appeal. The teacher knows that there is no better mental discipline for the young reader than to go through it understandingly. To read in the true sense one needs to learn to read poetry, real poetry, not fair verse. For that matter, the most attractive prose has never been written by those who cannot appreciate poetry. I believe that poetry will be composed and read and loved as long as the race lasts; that there will always be poets and lovers of poetry. But it can hardly regain its old monopoly, attracting to it the best authorship down the generations. It has too great competition—that is the chief difficulty it encounters. It has the competition of an interesting and multifarious prose, late in development in literary history, and now it has the competition of two new and extremely popular forms of art. Possibly, too, there will be other new forms that we do not now dream of, just as the Victorians never dreamed of our sound films or of our revival of purely oral literature over the radio. Poetry will always be with us, I repeat. There is no need for pessimism regarding its future. One may expect from time to time a "renaissance" of poetic interest and productivity. The select will always delight in it when it is of high quality; the masses will always cherish their favorite lyrics; but I do not see how poetry can ever again have the supreme monopoly and prestige that it once had.

# LINGUISTIC

## ON THE LINGUISTICS OF DREAMS

Psychologists and students of literature know how vast is the literature of dreams.<sup>1</sup> Yet, for the most part, investigators of sleep, dreams, and drowsiness have concerned themselves with the common hallucinations and perceptual phenomena that mark the transition between sleeping and waking. They have watched the pageantry of dreams, dream scenes and dream happenings; they have noted auditory and motor tendencies, and transformations and substitutions; they have probed mental states and examined trains of association; and they have tried for interpretations and explanations. Of late we have had a new school starting in Vienna that leans heavily on dream material and is obsessed with its own kind of interest in the subject. Despite, however, the existent dream literature or dream lore, I cannot find that the verbal side of dreaming has had proportionate exploration. It seems to me to be time that some one approach the subject from the linguistic angle only, and this paper tries that approach. It has been made independently, and it is not by a trained psychologist. But the subject has no little

.

<sup>1</sup> M. W. Calkins printed "Statistics of Dreams" in the *American Journal of Psychology*, V (1893), 311 ff. The European scholars Vold and Nillson, who worked near the turn of the century, opened the experimental era. Vold recorded his dreams during thirteen years and Nillson recorded about a thousand of his.

interest, for the layman as well as for the expert, and it deserves its share of attention.

For a few years I have collected at odd times, as opportunity offered, illustrative material on the verbal phases of dream experience. Such material might be expected to be ample and easily available, but ordinarily it is pretty difficult for the normal person to recapture the words, expressions, and sentences lingering in the twilight zone between sleeping and waking. Dream language slips away as rapidly as dream pageantry, and it is not often that one dreams in intelligible language form. Expression in words is subordinate to emotional and visual experience. Yet, especially if they are watched for and fixed in the mind at once on awakening, words, fragments, sentences, sometimes longer passages may be recovered and recorded.

The material assembled by me from various sources falls conveniently into these subdivisions: (I) Dream Neologisms, (II) Dream Sayings and Bits of Dialogue and Writing, (III) Dream Verse, (IV) Fantastic Fragments or Irrelevances, (V) Hypnopompic Language.

The instances I present are authentic, for I relied solely on trustworthy contributors. It should be added that all were of the lettered class, mainly educationists, scholars, fiction writers, and verse writers. I think it probable that dreaming in word form is rarer among the unlettered. The conjectural explanations of their coinages by contributors have interest and so do their dream settings when these can be remembered.

## I. DREAM NEOLOGISMS

These are of especial interest to linguistic students. Sometimes those who dream strange words can supply clues to their creation. At other times a word is recovered nearly in isolation; the situation in which it was evolved has faded. Its coiner cannot account for it or supply its meaning. In general dream neologisms, so far as I can learn, have not had the attention of students of language. They deserve illustration, and a list of all those I have collected follows. Most of the coinages, it will be noted, are nouns, with a few adjectives and verbs to be taken into account. Other classes of dream language will be illustrated less fully.

1. We seemed in my dream to be describing a person whom one in a group called an *akromaniac*. Another said, "I call him an *akmaniac*." A third said, "Well, I call him just a plain maniac."

2. In my dream a clown is fatally hurt and before dying he gives his idea of a real theater, exclaiming, "Let there be a *Ko-Kothurnus* for every man's son, and near the stage a sharp Promethean rock where one may tell his heart."

Perhaps *Ko-Kothurnus* is an echo of *cothurnus*, a high boot or buskin worn by the tragic actors of antiquity. The word was unintelligible to the dreamer, who is a teacher in a secondary school.

3. I dreamed one night of going to Canada and there finding under the trees enormous tables spread with food. When I asked the occasion for the celebration, some one said, "Why, don't you know? It's a *Knode*." Pronunciation *Kno-da*, *k* sounded. Meaning unknown to the dreamer.

4. As a bus-like vehicle passed out of sight I found myself saying, "There goes the old *hervey* down the street." I believe that the words *herdic* (a horse-drawn vehicle with which I was familiar for a short time in my childhood) and *conveyance* were in my mind.

5. Thinking of a passport *visa* I found myself saying, as I awoke, the word *Makotin* (accent on the second syllable, the *o* as in *hope*). The word was unintelligible to the dreamer.

6. As I awoke I found myself saying to a friend, "You're a regular *messenaire*, always messing things up."

7. I was dimly conscious that I should have been studying. A monotonous voice kept repeating, "*Getcher stroubles! Getcher stroubles!*" In my dream the sentence meant "Get your studies." Plainly a fusion of *studies* and *troubles*.

8. A cowboy in full regalia was showing me bright metal tools in the hope that I would buy them. "If you just had one of these *ramalooms* to punch holes with," he said, "you would ride swell." Possibly the term *cowpuncher* prompted this dream.

9. I dreamed that I was chased by dogs. I think I meant to say *nauseous quadruped* but the following resulted, "You get away, you *nautruped!*"

10. I found myself saying, "She is a very *philanthrormus* creature." Probably I meant *philanthropic*.

11. Some one said to me in a dream "Are you so *dummery* as that?" The adjective meant stupid and is plainly to be associated with *dumb*.

12. At a gay party one couple seemed a bit queer. Some one suggested that they could go to a freak show as Mr. *Shirt* and *Wirt*. Obviously *wife* was the word meant.

13. I dreamed that I always keep an *Arco-Bromley* cat at Waverley Place. Variant: *Arco-Bailly*. This seemed to be the name of a high breed of cats. Literally high, for the cat I saw in my dream seemed to dart about the top of a high dimly lighted wall, and though it was a large cat it seemed to look somewhat like a brown squirrel. *Arc-light* may have had something to do with the name. "Waverley Place" I cannot explain.



14. A woman was rushing frantically about a nursery exclaiming "*Dorianna, where's Dorianna!*" I think this name was a dream-coinage, I doubt whether I ever heard or read it.

15. "See that? That is where misers *mise* their treasure." This was the only instance of a back formation that was contributed.

16. In my dream I was attending a play. All that I recall was my exclamation on seeing a purple and gold theatrical set, "O what a beautiful *zmik!*"

17. In my dream there had been a sudden cold snap. During the night the temperature had fallen rapidly, and in the morning people were asking one another "Did you hear the *silvric* last night?" The *silvric*, it was understood, was the sound made by the mercury as it passed below.

18. I dreamed that one person asked another "Who was the first woman in the Scriptures?" The answer was "*Loridemia* Schubert."

19. In my dream I was listening to a discussion of the English Romantic Poets. I felt deeply humiliated at my ignorance when one participant said, "There were Coleridge and Byron and Shelley who thought that, and the great poet Fidla." Fidla, Fidla, I thought. Why do I know nothing of *him*?

20. I dreamed of a dish something like a tamale. Its name was *parsifalli pantinelli*.

21. An old fisherman entered the department store where I was and I heard him calling *tseego* and I awoke. It was 5:00 A.M. and some birds just outside my window were going "chirp, chirp" which perhaps prompted *tseego*.

22. In my dream some one was saying "They aren't yet *macevoiced*." I was not sure whether the word meant "engaged" or "married."

23. I remember coining the dream word *kurkled*. It came, I think, from "chuckled" and "gurgled."

24. I had been riding in a buggy with an old man I knew. When I got out I thought he said to me, "You are what my father used to call *God-cash*." I can't account for the term. I think, however, that he was characterizing me as one who had asked for a ride, a pre-automobile hitch-hiker.

25. I dreamed that a schoolmate and I, armed with guns, were hunting an ape that had been spreading cholera through the countryside. We found the animal, which was large and of an orange color, sitting on a housetop. We shot at the creature and could see our lead slugs bounce off its skull. A professor of mine was standing by watching us and offered the comment, "An *O-range'-o-range'* must be pierced through the heart." (Strong accent on the second syllable *-range*). The schoolmate and I looked at one another and by common consent turned our gunfire on the professor, who expired slowly while the ape evidently escaped.

I might mention that most of my dreams are vividly colored. A possible explanation of the orange-ouan, apparently the name the professor had in mind, lies in the fact that on the day previous to the dream I looked through my set of Poe. I did not read "The Murders of the Rue Morgue" however nor do I recall giving the story any particular thought.

26. My mother dreamed of holding a baby, a lanky one with long arms and legs hanging down. Its name seemed to be *Furian*. Thereafter all of us in the family used the word for some one long and lanky.

27. I dreamed of Harpo Marx and his be-moustached brother Groucho. Harpo held a beautiful beaded bag in his hand and proudly displaying it to Groucho he rather haughtily asked, "Can you *bead* that?" I had never thought of this pun before.

28. I was with a group of British young people who were complaining of the way parties had degenerated. "We don't have bridge parties or dances any more," said a girl. "Nobody has anything but *drousy companies*." This was apparently the recognized term for a planless social gathering at which no one thought of anything to do. I laughed immoderately in my dream at the term, thinking it an especially apt and novel Britishism. The young people could not understand my amusement.

29. I dreamed that I had received a circular announcing the publication of a new magazine for American Literature and enclosing a questionnaire. In acknowledgement of my reply, the publishers had written me a letter which contained the word *scharf*, which was entirely new to me. I determined to look up the word in the dictionary as soon as possible. When I awoke the dream was so vivid I at first thought it was an actual occurrence. When I recalled the unknown word I realized that it was a dream.

30. See also *huckalooed*, III, 6.

In the following instances familiar words were used in an unfamiliar way:

31. I dreamed that my son and I were surrounded by wolves. After beating them off with a club I said to my son, "Why will you *go wolwing around* that way?"

32. In my dream I was somewhere in the West. The party of which I was a member was supposed to ride horseback. But I objected to this. A big burly individual, not a cowboy, said contemptuously, "Can't you *cheese it*?" I turned to someone for explanation and learned that *cheese it* meant to ride astride.

33. I was going to make something for a domestic science exhibit. I said in my sleep, "I could bake a *patte*." *Patte* meant to me a little French cake. I do not know French.

Probably *pâté* was the word in the dreamer's mind.

34. My mother dreamed that she and a friend came into her home to find a strange man asleep there and she exclaimed: "He looks just like an *Oher*." *Oher* is Moravian for giant. She speaks Moravian only occasionally.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> A bilingual dream, as well as other interesting dream sayings, is cited in H. B. Alexander's "The Subconscious in the Light of Dream Imagery and Imaginative Expression," *Proceedings of the American Society for Psychical Research*, III (1909), 612-34.

## II. DREAM SAYINGS AND BITS OF DIALOGUE AND WRITING

These are often as surprising or novel or humorous, yet intelligible, as are dream neologisms. Some suggest trains of association, some are pithy and pretty logical; most are somehow vaguely telling.<sup>3</sup> There is little sustained creation. In literary biography instances are recorded of dreamers of unusually vivid imagination and retentive memory who can hold long speeches in the mind, or long descriptive passages; but I have not found such persons among my contributors.<sup>4</sup>

1. Many testify to hearing names called out suddenly, theirs or the names of relatives, friends, or acquaintances, and sometimes names that are unfamiliar, like the "Dorianna" or "Loridemia" of I, 14, 18.

2. I am now twenty but in my dream thought myself a little girl. I went with my father to a hospital to see my mother. Just before leaving the hospital I heard a nurse say to my father, "You're going to have a little benefit in three weeks." Apparently *benefit* referred to an approaching birth.

3. I dreamed that a friend was thinking of buying a dachshund. I looked at the animal and awoke, finding myself saying, "It seems to be missing some arms and legs. You'd better refer the matter to an expert." I think I was confusing the animal with a centipede.

4. My cousin, talking in her sleep, said, "The corner of my neck hurts."

5. This was dreamed in my early youth. My older sister reproved me for some request. "Don't be a pert little monkey." I responded, "I was not pertly monkeying, I was politely requesting."

<sup>3</sup> A few such sayings are entered in H. L. Hollingworth's "The Psychology of Drowsiness," *American Journal of Psychology*, XXII (1911), 99-211. Brander Mathews has some amusing dream sayings in *These Many Years* (1917), pp. 434-36, and Mark Twain records some interesting dream words in "My Platonic Sweetheart," *Harper's Magazine*, Dec., 1912.

<sup>4</sup> Lafcadio Hearn, "Readings from a Dream-Book," in *Shadowings* (1900), admits that he could not recapture his "readings" exactly and filled in and rearranged them in his waking moments: "By regularly taking care to write down immediately upon awakening whatever I could remember reading in the dream-book, I found myself able to reproduce portions of the text. But the order in which I now present these fragments is not at all the order in which I recovered them. If they seem to have any interconnection, this is only because I tried to arrange them in what I imagined to be the rational sequence. Of their original place and relation I know scarcely anything."

One suspects that Coleridge when recording his dream poem *Kubla Khan* rearranged or filled in, in wakeful composition, in something the manner of Hearn. His first line, from Purchas, may well have been the cue for the dream imagery and Coleridge followed the cue when awake. His dream impulse may have run out, since there was nothing behind it, and the story of the interruption by the person from Porlock be apocryphal.

There is literary interest and sometimes literary quality in the trance utterance of Mrs. Verrall, as recorded in the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, and also in those of Patience Worth.

6. I was taking an oral examination preparatory to entering the Omaha Central High School. "Are you married?" queried the examiner? "Yes." "Who to?" "My husband."

7. In my dream Dr. Terman of Berkeley was saying to a group of students that people don't know what they say. He proceeded to remark that he was going to ask each of them for a sentence and that he doubted whether they would know the meaning of the words they said. My sentence was, "The King of England is a good fellow."

8. I had been reading detective stories. I dreamed the following and managed to retain it, because of its character, long enough to get it down. It opened the first chapter of a learned [*sic*] book I was writing. "X marks the spot where the body of Sir George Soho was found at the foot of the statue of Emanuel Swedenborg in Collum Square. The question is, 'Who whisked away the corpse?'"

9. I dreamed that I had written a book, apparently on American place-names, and I was reading a long review of it. I read it paragraph after paragraph and was much provoked to come upon this sentence: "We can hardly expect a work in which the author writes *Charleston* as *Charles Town* to be taken seriously." The correct form really was *Charles Town*, and I had taken great pains to preserve it. My annoyance at the reviewer's unfairness was so strong that it woke me up, and hence I was able to recall the sentence. I could remember only one other phrase from the review, "The author has his ax out for Schoolcraft." This refers, I suppose, to the Amerindian scholar Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, whose accounts of travels in Missouri I have had occasion to use; but I have never formed an opinion one way or another about him.

Some dream sayings show cunning or suggest thought, though the thought is non-intellectual. A special type of subconscious or half-conscious "wit" may lie back of some dream utterances. Certainly many have an oracular or poetic value. That the whole range of proverbs, apothegms, spells, or "runic sayings," has a dream or trance background if it could be found, is the conjecture of one contributor, a person unusually endowed as regards imagination and powers of thought and expression. The following sayings are from this dreamer.

10. I was reading a newspaper and was struck by a headline, "Says Truth is the Profile of Reality." In my dream I understood this to be a reporter's version of some speech, presumably notable. As a matter of fact, this definition of truth is as good as any I have ever seen. I should stand by it with my waking wits.

11. I'm a man of decision. I always flip a coin.

12. His is a transparent nature. Yes, he has *lucid* intervals.

13. Freely and without prejudice books offer their counsel.

## III. DREAM VERSE

The relation of dreams to poetry has long been of interest to students of either subject. Much has been written of this relation, in its various phases, in our own and in other times.<sup>5</sup> The dream or trance songs of primitive peoples have had attention as well as the compositions of sophisticated moderns. Milton and Coleridge are familiar examples of poets who composed expanded consecutive passages in sleep and retained them well enough to write them out on awakening. My illustrations of dream verse are nearly all in single-line form. The context of the lines had faded. Most came from persons who had printed more or less verse.

1. I dreamed this line—I cannot explain it:

"Lest we too clearly see ourselves go halting by."

2. This is all that stayed of a poem I composed in my dream:

"Through your own shadow glow departed blessings."

3. In my dream I composed a poem ending with these words, which are all that I recall of it:

"And memory crawls up the wrinkled years."

4. The same dreamer reported also:

"On the wall the firelight twittering."

5. My sister composed in a dream a popular song having this title, which was all she remembered of it:

"Paw, let the cows pass by."

6. In a dream I was reading the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*. I saw very clearly the newspaper page and on it was printed a poem entitled "The Stars." I read with a waxing glow a poem of perhaps twenty or thirty lines, until I came to the last and most thrilling line of all. "Ah," thought I in my dream, "could I write but one such line I should be a poet." When I awoke the line or verse still remained vivid. It was:

"And the Morning Star huckalooed to the Ladies."

7. The following quatrain was reported as dreamed in Philadelphia in 1893, by a man who had seen a prizefight the day before:

"At first they fought with tooth and tongue,

But when it came to blows,

The man who had the stronger lung

Blew off the other's nose."

8. These bits of a poem lingered when I awoke. I had been reading Emily Dickinson that night.

"And we who plotted pyramids

Diapers obtain."

<sup>5</sup> See *Poetry and Dreams* by F. H. Prescott (1912). Also my *Poetic Origins and the Ballad* (1921), Chapter I, and my "Caedmon's Dream Song," *Studies in Philology in Honor of Frederick Klaeber* (1929).

Variants were "plotted Pyrenees" and "planted peninsulas."

These dream lines seem to be a distorted auditory image of part of Emily Dickinson's poem:

"A furlong than a league  
Inflicts a pricklier pain—  
Till we, who smiled at Pyrenees,  
Of parishes complain."

9. I dreamed that I was a school girl of the '80's in a school room under the instruction of Charles Laughton in the role of Edward Moulton-Barrett. Standing with their backs to the blackboard the pupils listened to his withering speech. "You think it easy to write and to teach people to write? I will show you that it is not. Turn to the board and write backward a poem on your hearts." I had a moment of consternation followed by the easing of inspiration and writing each word backward I put this on the board:

Once I thought a rubber ball:  
Not at all  
For the little ball was glass—  
Let that pass.  
Now, a birdie, come to rest  
In the pocket of your vest.

10. The last two lines of what was apparently a lyric dreamed one night not long ago stayed in my memory. I realized that the pathos of the lines was inappropriate to the joyous Christmas season when I dreamed it.

And I upon an empty shelf  
Lie starving for your tears.

11. My mother wrote some five-line stanzas in a dream. All she remembered was the last line.

I'm sorry that I ain't but I'm glad that I ain't any ain'ter.

#### IV. FANTASTIC FRAGMENTS OR IRRELEVANCES

Linguistic material of this type is frequent in dreams, but its lack of point or its *non-sequitur* character makes retention of it in the mind unlikely. Sometimes single lines that have no apparent meaning are said over and over again. It is hard to see how they came to put themselves together or to stay in the memory. Some fragments have traces of sense. Others are absurd or unintelligible or irrelevant. Here are a few illustrations.

1. On awaking I found myself saying, and believing it poetry, this line:  
"Fellow in the food, that's what it means."

2. I repeated, "They came from afar in circles." To whom or what "they" referred I was unable to recall.

3. "I dwelt among the tree tops." I can't explain this. My relatives commented that it showed "Tarzan influence."

4. I could not recall on awakening the situation in which I found myself saying over and over these words of comment, "She is a real boy hero, pursuant upon the consequences."

5. For no accountable reason I was talking to a man from whom I wished to buy some rattlesnakes. When I asked about them he said, "O, you mean Fish? They're Devils. They're dangerous!" *Fish* seemed a queer synonym for *rattlesnake*.

6. In my dream there was a knock at the door and two girls appeared. They looked like students and were carrying books. As I opened the door they asked me for food. At this I burst into violent laughter and responded, "My name is Miss Pettyjinn!" What brought this surname to my mind, or why I was so unsympathetic, I do not know.

7. For some reason I found myself saying suddenly in my dream and without context, "Trained seals often conduct themselves exactly like little pigs."

8. I recall being vaguely aware of a figure leading a group with splurge and considerable fanfare down the main street. Some one near me said, "Here comes Silver Chief Boss with his rout."

9. I dreamed that when I went to open the school building one morning a rough-looking red-haired man crowded up to the door and insisted on going in with me. I said, "I'm not allowed to let strangers in." He replied, "But you don't know who I am." "Yes I do," I said. "You're a Judge of the Supreme Court."

## V. HYPNOPOMPIC LANGUAGE

A tendency toward highfalutin language or verbal pomposity is often exhibited, at least in the dream speech of the highly educated. It probably corresponds to the illusions of vastness or grandeur that are familiar in the pageantry of dreams. For this tendency I have used the word *hypnopompic*, perhaps inadvisedly since this is not the sense in which the term was employed by F. W. H. Myers, who launched it.<sup>6</sup> Sleep-inducing images are *hypnogogic* and sleep-dispelling images are *hypnopompic*. As I employ the term, the emphasis is on *pomp*, in its present-day meaning, too, not in the sense of the Greek *pompos*, conductor or guide. Pretentious speech, such as the dreamer would hardly use ordinarily, formulates itself in sleep and seems to him appropriate and impressive, although, when he awakens, it may seem the opposite.

1. See "The Morning Star huckalooed to the Ladies" (III, 6).

2. See "Let there be a Ko-Kothurnus for every man's son, etc." (I, 2).

3. I was lured into a forbidden palace by the Anti-Christ. As the gates closed behind me he boomed: "Dire destruction to all who come into my portals." Probably I was echoing some sixteenth-century reading matter that I had been going through.

<sup>6</sup> F. W. H. Myers, *Human Personality* (1903).

4. I dreamed that I composed a novel. It seemed to be of the swashbuckling type and of the period of the Crusades. I had been discussing Sir Walter Scott in class. All that I remembered on waking was the title, which I thought marvelous, "The Philandering Hick."

5. A year later I wrote another novel, again after classroom discussion of fiction. The contents escaped me altogether, but again I remembered the title, "Wastebaskets of the Mighty."

My novel writing in dreams does not mean that I have "suppressed desires" in this direction. Had I ever wished, in my waking moments, to write novels, I would have done so.

6. The young son of a friend awoke to find himself saying (he told it to his mother who was so impressed by it that she wrote it down at once): "He found peace at last in the bottom of a well."

On the whole, the dream coinages, sayings, and bits of dialogue and verse that I have cited seem to me to be mainly random fusions, chance creations suggested by words or memories or reading matter emerging from the hinterland of the sleeper's mind. A psychoanalyst examining my material might find that it symbolized something profound in his field, or perhaps something hectic. The Freudians rely amazingly on dream material. According to the popular idea of them they might deduce that my masculine contributors wished to marry chorus girls and my feminine contributors their chauffeurs. Yet it is still a question whether dream lore has much underlying significance of this type that is trustworthy.

It is natural that the linguistic material of dreams should have had less attention than other phases of dream experience. Most dreams are more imagery than wrought words or wrought phrasing. The emotional or visual experiences or the happenings of dreams loom larger than the verbal element. Dreams are a subjective, private matter, while speech and writing are external and social. Language formulates itself with awakening to the outer world. The utterances of dreams have, nevertheless, curious interest, like other phenomena of dreams. Perhaps when such material has been brought together over long periods of time, and from many sources, it may be found to have not only unmistakable human interest but a scientific value that is not now apparent.



## INTRUSIVE NASALS IN PRESENT-DAY ENGLISH

### I. EARLIER DISCUSSIONS OF INTRUSIVE NASALS

Intrusive *n* in English has been treated many times. Mätzner<sup>1</sup> and Ellis<sup>2</sup> called attention to its insertion in several Middle English trisyllabic words, as *nightingale* from older *nihtegale*, or *messenger* from older *messagere*. Storm<sup>3</sup> notes the same phenomenon in modern vulgar English *milintary*, *skelinton*, *solentary*. Since 1902, a group of special articles have dealt with this Middle English added *n*. Professor Jespersen,<sup>4</sup> dissenting from Sweet's remark, quoted by Oertel,<sup>5</sup> that *nightingale* owes its medial *n* to the influence of *evening*, repeated and added to the cases noted by Mätzner and Ellis, and formulated a rule, or 'law', which he did not at the time try to explain: "A nasal was very often inserted before [g] or [dʒ] in the weakly stressed middle syllable of a trisyllable stressed on the first syllable; the insertion took place in the Middle

<sup>1</sup> *Engl. Gramm.*, I, p. 189.

<sup>2</sup> *Early Engl. Pronunc.*, p. 757, note 3.

<sup>3</sup> *Engl. Philol.*, I, pp. 823, 946 (1896). See also Horn, *Histor. Neuengl. Gramm.*, § 225 (1908).

<sup>4</sup> *Engl. Stud.*, 31, 239 (1902).

<sup>5</sup> *Lectures on the Study of Language*, p. 162, (1902). Sweet, *New Engl. Grammar*, § 1551.

English period." Dr. Bradley<sup>6</sup> could not feel that Middle English infixed *n*, at least in *nightingale*, was due to the working of a uniform law, and suggested that *nightingale* may owe its *n* to the influence of *galingale*, a common word in the early Middle English period, having its nasal by etymological right. Professor Logeman,<sup>7</sup> on the other hand, accepted the 'law', and endeavored to supply the explanation which Professor Jespersen did not seek. He suggested a purely phonetic or physiological cause, having its origin in ease or clearness of utterance. The discussion then shifted to *Archiv*.<sup>8</sup> Here Dr. Otto Ritter brought to bear some new material, and enlarged Professor Jespersen's law to include not only Middle but Old and Modern English; to hold not only before [g] and [dʒ], but also before *d* and *t*; and for the middle syllables not only of tri-, but also of quadrisyllabic words. In the same periodical a year later, Professor Luick<sup>9</sup> emphasized the rhythm of the word and the length or shortness of the middle syllable as governing factors, and expressed the belief that the intrusion of *n* was bound up with the Middle English laws of syncope. The most recent treatment of infixed *n*, so far as I know, occurs in Jespersen's *Modern English Grammar*.<sup>10</sup> Here the author repeats the chief instances for Middle English, and adds:

"*Westminster, Elphinstone, Robinson*, etc. . . . were pronounced familiarly without *n* . . . The rhythm in all these is the same, and as we find that in many words of the same rhythm (which may be compared with that of *maiden queen*, etc.) an (*n*) or (ŋ) is inserted, the conclusion is not unwarranted that there was at some time a vacillation between the pronunciation with and without a nasal in the middle syllable: *Westmister* by the side of *Westminster* led to *messenger* by the side of *messenger*, which latter eventually became extinct."

It will be seen that the discussions of inserted nasals in English<sup>11</sup> have hinged almost wholly about its appearance in unaccented syllables of tri-, or quadrisyllabic words, and that Middle English

<sup>6</sup> *Mod. Phil.* I, 203 (1903-4).

<sup>7</sup> *Engl. Stud.*, 34, 249 (1904).

<sup>8</sup> *Arch. für d. stud. d. neueren sprachen*, 113, 31 (1904).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* 114, 76 (1905).

<sup>10</sup> Part I, sections 2,429-2,432 (1910).

<sup>11</sup> For some references to infixed *n* in Old English, see the articles by Logeman, Ritter, and Luick, cited above. Jespersen and Logeman refer to similar intrusions in Dutch words; see also "The Jersey Dutch Dialect" (*American Dialect*

has had the chief attention. Explanation has been sought in physiological causes, with emphasis on the nature of the following sound. The rhythm of the word has been thought important, the *n* being added, it is frequently pointed out, only under certain fixed conditions. The tendency toward syncope of Middle English unaccented medial syllables, and the reaction against this, has been given prominence; and also the instability of Middle English medial *n*; its likelihood to disappear being paralleled, thinks Professor Jespersen, by its likelihood to be introduced. Save for Dr. Bradley, who did not press his case very strongly, and won no following, no stress has been placed on associative interference or disturbance, i.e. on the unconscious convergence of words of somewhat similar phonetic type.

## II. INFIXED NASALS IN PRESENT AMERICAN SPEECH

Though the fact of their occurrence is mostly overlooked, infix nasal are often found in present-day English. The following list of words showing such insertions was made as the instances came under my observation, or were reported by others.<sup>12</sup> The examples were collected, partly as interesting for their own sake, partly in the hope that some light might be thrown thereby on the same phenomenon in earlier periods of the language. Because of their nature—they are hardly striking enough to suggest the racy flavor of dialect, or to give particular “local color”—many of the forms cited here may find their way to the printed page for the first time. The list includes all the secondary nasals that have come

*Notes*, III, 464). Professor Logeman's article on intrusive nasals in Dutch, published in the periodical *Taal en Letteren*, May, 1904, I have not been able to see. References for intrusive nasals in Old French, Modern German, and Modern Greek may be found in Ritter's article. For instances in Old French, see also Menger, *The Anglo-Norman Dialect*, p. 85 (1904).

The discussion in the present paper is limited to added medial *n*. For added initial *n*, see chiefly Scott, *Transact. of the American Philol. Assoc.*, 1892-94; also Palmer, *Folk-Etymology*, 1882; and Wright, *Engl. Dial. Grammar*, § 266. The *n* of such words as *bittern* is not treated here, nor of dialectal *offn*, *clearn*, *hishn*, *whosn*, *thisn*, etc. A few references to added *n*, in its various positions, may be found in the dissertations of Grüning, *Schwund und zusatz von konsonanten in den neuenglischen dialekten*, Strassburg, (1905), and Franzmeyer, *Studien über den konsonantismus und vokalismus der neuenglischen dialekten*, Strassburg, (1906).

<sup>12</sup> Special acknowledgement should be made to Miss S. T. Muir, of the faculty in English of the Lincoln High School.

to my attention in the past four or five years, except for a few "nonce formations," i.e. words representing accidental utterance, when it was the speaker's intention to say something else. Such a form as "plea(n)sing," for instance, heard in "pleansingly clean," was not included. Nonce-words have their interest, and they help to illustrate influences and tendencies; but the individual aberrations in language here listed are persistent aberrations. They represent in each case, not some form of "aphasia," but the user's real conception, and customary utterance of the word.

**almighty**, almighty. "God Almighty." Heard sometimes from the pulpit and elsewhere.

**ampron**, apron. Somewhat common. See the author's article in *American Dialect Notes*, III, p. 58. Other instances have been noted since the article was published.

**anttic**, attic. Occasional among the partly educated. Possibly there is confusion with the word *antic* 'prank.'

**asphyxiated**, asphyxiated. The speakers of this seemed to associate it with (1) the *sphinx*, or (2) the -ynx of *larynx* or *pharynx*, words which they had heard, or knew.

**brenth**, breadth. Obviously due to the analogy of *length*, and so explained by Ellis. See *brenth* in Wright's *English Dialect Dictionary*.

**coment**, comet. "A fiery coment hung over Jerusalem." Used by the partly educated. See *helment*, below. Or perhaps there is confusion with *comment*, 'remark.'

**disturbmance**, disturbance. One case of this reported. "A great disturbmance was created." A better spelling might be *disturbments*. The user thought of the word as having, not the suffix -ance but -ment (*element*, etc.), yet retained the -s of the real suffix.

**dogmantic**, dogmatic. Two cases noted. Found under the same conditions as *dramantic*, below.

**dramantic**, dramatic. Found in themes of high school students and young college students. Spoken as well as written.

**fanantic**, fanatic. Rather frequent. Same conditions as for *dramantic*.

**finx**, fix. "Please finx that for me." Used by the half-educated.

**helment**, helmet. A few cases reported from the usage of young students. As with *disturbmance*, the intrusive nasal was due to confusion with the suffix -ment.

**immediently**, immediately. Compare *immedient*, *immediently*, in the *English Dialect Dictionary*.

**intimant**, intimate. Common. "She's an intimant friend."

**kintchen**, kitchen. Common among the half-educated.

**menencing**, menacing. Found in themes. Spoken by the users as well as written. Due perhaps to the analogy of *balancing*,

- sentencing, reverencing*, etc. When asked the infinitive, one user gave *menance*, another *menace*.
- messege**, message. "At last I had a messege." Heard from the the half-educated; compare Thackeray's "messaging," quoted by Storm. Built out of *messenger*; or perhaps taking the ending of *challenge*, etc.
- mighnt**, might. Common. See *Dialect Notes*, III, p. 58; also *ibid.* I, pp. 22, 59, where *mighnt* is said to be general among the working people of Western New York.
- mighnty**, mighty. "I'm mighnty glad to see you."
- minent**, minute. "Wait a minent." Compare *meenont*, *English Dialect Dictionary*.
- minx**, mix, mingle. Used by the half-educated. "Minx the pudding." Hence also *minxt*, *mixt*.
- minxture**, mixture. See *minx*.
- munincipal**, municipal. Very common. The users seemed to pattern the word after *principal*.
- munincipality**, municipality.
- obstant**, obstinate. Same conditions as for *dramantic*, etc.
- obstantcy**, obstinacy.
- ompen**, open. Rather rare. See *Dialect Notes*, III, p. 58.
- pamper**, paper. "I saw it in the pamper." Rare. According to Professor Logeman, *Englische Studien*, XXXIV, p. 249, *pam-pier* for *papier* occurs in Dutch. See also "The Jersey Dutch Dialect," *American Dialect Notes*, III, p. 464, where *pamper* and other instances of inserted nasals are given.
- penetrate**, penetrate. Probably due to vague analogy with *concentrate*, etc.
- prensent**, present. "At the prensent time." Rare.
- quient**, quiet. Occasional among the half-educated.
- rendolent**, redolent. Found under the same conditions as *dramantic*, etc. Perhaps due to the influence of *indolent*, *pendulant*, *undulant*, etc.
- semenster**, semester. Infrequent. Same conditions as for *dramantic*, etc.
- stachinary**, statuary. Obviously due to the influence of *stationary*, *stationery*.
- subordinant**, subordinate. Same conditions as for *dramantic*, etc. Rather common.
- unprecedentedly**, unprecedentedly. Found under the same conditions as *dramantic*, etc. The inserted nasal seems to be due to anticipation of the next syllable.
- Uninted States**, United States. Common, even among educated speakers. Also "Uninted we stand, divided we fall," etc. I have never heard a nasal inserted in the parallel words *benighted*, *alighted*, etc.

Additional cases of inserted *n*, in words which have not come under my own observation, are:

**minges**, midges. Reported from Maine, *Dialect Notes* I, p. 391.

Compare *mindges*, in Ellis, and in the *English Dialect Dictionary*.

**gnunk**,<sup>13</sup> genug. See "German Dialect in the Valley of Virginia", *Dialect Notes*, III, iv, p. 274.

Analyzed, the list shows inserted *n* in monosyllables before *t*, *k*, *th*, *dʒ*, (*mighnt*, *finx*, *brenth*, *mindge*); in dissyllables, in both accented and unaccented position, before *tʃ*, *k*, *z*, *t*, (*kintchen*, *minxture*, *prensent*, *minent*, *quient*); in trisyllables, in accented and unaccented position, before *d*, *t*, *s*, in initial, medial, and final syllables (*rendolent*, *dramantic*, *semenster*, *uninted*, *menencing*, *intimant*, *obstant*); in quadrisyllables, in accented and unaccented position, before *s*, *tʃ*, and *t* (*munincipal*, *stachinary*, *subordinant*); and in words of five syllables, before *k*, *t*, *d* (*asphynxiated*, *immediently*, *unprecedentedly*). Inserted *m* appears in the accented syllable of dissyllables, before *p*; an exception is *disturbmance*. Inserted *m* is comparatively rare.

The associative interference responsible for some of these words was pointed out as they were entered. *Fanantic*, *dogmantic*, *dramantic*, plainly take their *n* from being grouped alongside words like *romantic*, *pedantic*, *Atlantic*, etc. *Intimant*, *obstant*, *subordinant*, show the influence of the familiar ending of *dominant*, *galant*, *eminent*, *prominent*, etc. So, perhaps, *quient* and *immedient*. *Minx* probably owes its *n* to *mingle*. It is unlikely that the form, in America at least, is the descendant of Wiclif's *mynge*, "mynge ye double to hir," *Apoc*, xviii 6 (1388). See *ming*, *mingse* in the *English Dialect Dictionary*. Hence *minxture*, helped perhaps by *tincture*, often *tinxture* in popular speech. In a striking number of the instances cited, a nasal is already present in the word, in some other position (*fanantic*, *mighnt*, *intimant*, *uninted*, *menencing*, etc.). Only in the case of added *m* does the cause seem at all likely to be purely phonetic. A small number of the words (*penetrate*, *menencing*, *stachinary*), show the secondary nasal of weakly

<sup>13</sup> For additional examples of intrusive nasals in American English, see *Modern Language Notes* XXX (February, 1915), 45-47, and *Dialect Notes* IV (1916), 355. The commonest example, seen often in print, is *grimance*, spoken with initial accent, for *grimace*. *Trinkling* for *trickling* is common also.

accented middle syllables which has hitherto monopolized attention.<sup>14</sup>

### III. SOME INFIXED NASALS IN ENGLISH DIALECTS

The following instances of words showing inserted nasals in English dialects are drawn from the Wright *English Dialect Dictionary*. The Wright *Dialect Grammar* treats the inorganic initial *n*, final *n*, and medial *n* in unstressed syllables, hitherto often given attention, and brings to bear additional material from the dialects; but there is no recognition that inserted *n* is as common, or more common, elsewhere, under other conditions, in English dialect words. The list is by no means exhaustive. In words of obscure etymology, it is often hardly possible to tell whether loss or addition of medial *n* is involved; these cases I did not wish to include. Entry was not made of the particular regions in which the words are localized, or the conditions under which they are found. These are fully given in the *English Dialect Dictionary*.

**bollinton, bolliton.** In phrase, to give bolliton, to inflict punishment, or chastisement.

**brenth, breadth.** "T'length, an' brenth, an' depth." The nasal is due to the analogy of *length*.

**erumption, outburst, rumpus.** Cf. *erruption*, violent outburst, eruption. The *n* here is probably due to *rumpus*.

**flintermouse, flindermouse.** Variants of *flittermouse*, the bat.

**immedient, immediantly, immediate, immediately.**

**minch, to play truant, to 'mitch'** (*meech, mooch*).

**mincher, truant, 'mitcher.'**

**minent, meenint, meenont, minute.** Scotch.

**mingin, mingen, minchin, a small gnat, a midge.**

**mingse, minkse, minx, mix, mingle.** See the American list, also.

**minkster, minxter, mixture.**

**omperlogies, apologies, difficulties.** "I couldn't get on with him, he made so many omperlogies." The *m* here is due to the contamination of *apology* with *hamper* (Wright).

<sup>14</sup> In "At the Lonely Port," one of the stories in *Half-True Tales*, by C. H. Aulgur, New York, 1891, the nasal infix is a persistent feature of the speech of one of the characters, an old Canadian. Specimen sentences are: "I'm only an angriculturist, myself" . . . "Now just wait till I tell th' old 'oman to put a stink of wood i' th' stnove" . . . "I' old 'oman's gettin' th' supper. It'll not be munch, but ye'll enxuse it, I'm thinking'" . . . "There was a man from the States named Stumbbs who used to coom hereabout to buy wheant; an' one dai he coom to me—he used to stomp with me" . . . "I once hearnd a great speench" . . . "He's breankin' the law; but he's trusted me, an' I'll not manke him troumble."

**ramshankling, ramshackling**, worthless. Cf. Wall, *Anglia*, XX, p. 115, who connects *ramshackle* with Icel. *ranskakkr*.

**ringe, ridge**, especially of vegetables, a row. Perhaps crossed with O. Fr. *renge*, 'rank, file' (Godefroy). Cf. *range* in *range-wood*, etc. (Wright).

**scallenge, skallenge, scallage**, a lych-gate, etc.

**semnant, semant, semment, semmint, semmit**, soft, pliable. Also **semmanty**, gracefully formed, flexible, beside **semmity**.

**skimmington, skimmenton, skimitin, skimmity, skymaton**, etc. A ceremony practiced on unpopular persons. "An exhibition of riding by two persons in a cart, having skimmers and ladles, with which they carry on a sort of warfare or gambols." Jennings (1825). See also "She ought to be skimmerton-rid," etc.

**spentacle, spenticle**, etc., spectacle.

**stallange, stallenge**, etc. A dialect form of *stallage*.

**stallenger**. Agent-noun built on the preceding.

**splash**, to wade through water, long grass, etc. "The water was over the steps, so we had to splash through." This looks like a nasalized form of *splash*.

**storbanting, storbating**, stowboating, dredging.

**wengables**, corruption of *vegetables*. This suggests confusion with *vendables*.

In *flintermouse*, *flindermouse*, above (German *flittermaus*) the *n* is old. See "the flyndermows and the wezel," Caxton, *Reynard* (1481), 112. It may well be that, in addition to the often discussed cases of added *n* in weakly stressed middle syllables, there are instances of inserted nasals, under other conditions, in Middle English; like the *n* in *flindermouse*, which, it is seen, is contemporary with the added *n*'s of many words of the *nightingale*, *messenger* groups. In this paper no attempt has been made to add to the instances of infixed nasals already noted for the older language, nor yet to canvass for instances in the later standard language. The purpose was rather to collect material, and to watch processes, in the speech of today; since it is here that one should be able best to detect the influences at work.

#### IV. SOME CONCLUSIONS

Many factors undoubtedly enter into the addition of *n*, or *ŋ*, as of other consonants, at different periods, or within any one period, in the history of the language. For the most part, each case needs to be taken up by itself, even where there appear to be clear groups. It seems time, however, to recognize that intrusive *n* is not so limited a phenomenon, falling so invariably into fixed cate-



gories, as might have appeared. Rather is it widespread, and has existed, to some extent, in all periods of the language. It is not to be associated too rigidly with certain definite word-forms or conditions; nor is it wholly dependent on the nature of the following sound. Treatment of it should be enlarged to recognize that it appears medially in stressed as well as unstressed syllables; not only in tri- and quadrisyllabic words, but in monosyllables, and words of five syllables. It appears not only before *g, dʒ, d, t*, but before *s, z, tʃ, ʃ, k, th*. Explanations based on physiological cause, on the rhythm of the word, or on the instability of medial unstressed *n*, should not have exclusive emphasis. Probably no one explanation holds for all the added *n*'s, even in medial weak syllables; but if one cause holds more than another, it is that which has had least emphasis hitherto, and is psychological, rather than physiological or phonetic; i.e., is that strongest force at work in language, assimilation by analogy, making for uniformity.

As regards the intrusive nasals in Middle English,<sup>15</sup> probably we are too far from the time when these entered, to determine in each instance the cause. We have seen that the ground is insecure enough even when it is present-day intrusions that are dealt with. In treating the groups of words in question, however, two things, I believe, should be taken more into account. These are:

1. The chronology of the added nasals. All words showing added *n* are usually grouped under one explanation, whether the *n* appeared in the thirteenth century, or in the seventeenth; four centuries is a long time for a single linguistic force or influence to remain potent.

2. More reference should be made to Old French, from which many of the words in question are derived. Some of the forms—a circumstance to which little or no attention has been given<sup>16</sup>—had their secondary nasals in Old French, where such intrusion is not unusual.

Of the first group under discussion, the earliest word to show

<sup>15</sup> The chief instances of intrusive *n*, as the list is usually given, are: *nightingale* < *nihtegale*, *Portyngale* < *Portugal*, *martingale* < *martigale*, *fardingale* < *fardigale*, *messenger* < *messenger*, *harbinger* < *harbeger*, *passenger* < *passager*, *porringer* < *porrager*, *scavenger* < *scavager*, *stallanger* < *stallager*, *ostringer* < *ostreger*, *murenger* < *murager*, *popinjay* < *papejay*; also *muckinder* < *mokadour*, *cullender* < *colador*.

<sup>16</sup> The exception is Dr. Ritter, *op. cit. supra*.

added medial *n* is *nightingale*.<sup>17</sup> The intrusive nasal appears in the thirteenth century, though not permanent until later. Who can say, after a lapse of six or seven centuries, just how or why this particular *n* was first added? Perhaps it was, after all, as Dr. Bradley suggested, through association with the similar word, having medial *n* by etymological right, *galyngale*. But there are many other possibilities; sometimes it is a seemingly far-fetched or fanciful explanation which is the right one. (1) The nasalized form might conceivably be due to the influence of OE. *nihterness*, 'night season'. *nihterne*, 'by night', as *nightingale* < *nihtern-gale*. Compare "The Nighterne Owl that night will cease from prey, howling by night as she did howl by day." Brathwait, *Strappado*, 1615. However this might as easily have given \**nightergale*. (2) The nasal might be due to the influence of the Old French word, *rossignol*, curiously parallel in sound, which was used for a time alongside the native word. That the two languages reacted on each other in the transitional period is well known. Jespersen<sup>18</sup> suggests, for example, that *put* may be a blending of OE. *potian* and Fr. *bouter*. It is hard to separate in *rich*, *main*, *gain*, OE. *rice* and Fr. *riche*; OE. *mægen* and Fr. *maine*; ME. *geyynen* and Fr. *gagner*. *Iegland* came to be spelled *island*, owing to the influence of Fr. *isle*. *She* may be a blending of *sēo* and Icel. *sjā*. These are not exact analogues; but, where there was some resemblance, assimilation was likely enough. (3) The *n* might have been due to the extension of *night* through the common suffix, with attributive function, *-en*, giving *nightingale* beside *nightgale*.<sup>19</sup> Compare *golden*, *oaken*, *wooden*, *ashen*, Spenser's *treen*, etc.; and the *firsten*, *nexten*, of the popular ballads. (4) There might have been—this seems perhaps likeliest—vague confusion with the suffix of the present participle, as of the ME. verb *nihten*, *nighten* (Chaucer); something like *skimmington* from *skimmerton*, or *skimaton*, in the English list above; compare also familiar word-rhythms like *singing bird*, *crying child*, etc. So one might perhaps continue. What is certain is that *nightingale* is the only word of the group on which we need linger. There can be no question of a 'law' when it is seen that there was no group of

<sup>17</sup> The pronunciation of this word which I hear oftenest, except in careful speech, is not the *nighting-gale* of Dr. Sweet and Miss Soames, or the *nightin-gale* of Dr. Bradley, but reduces the middle syllable to *n* or *ən*;—*nightngale*.

<sup>18</sup> *Modern English Grammar*, 2, 12.

<sup>19</sup> This form occurs till about 1500.

-igale words contemporaneously changing to -ingale. Chaucer's *Portyngale*, O. Fr. *Portingalois*, Portuguese, *Portingal*, Portugal, entered English with its nasal already present. The *Oxford Dictionary* cites no examples of *Portugal*, without *n*, before the sixteenth century. *Paringal*, *parigal*, which might be grouped with these words,<sup>20</sup> had its occasional nasal in Old French, also. *Martingale*, classed by both Dr. Bradley and Professor Jespersen,<sup>21</sup> along with *Portingal*, as taking added *n*, brought an *n* into English, O. Fr. *martengalle*, Fr. *martingale*, Sp., It. *Martingala*. Dr. Murray cites no earlier \**martigale*. Instead of needing explanation itself, *martingale* helps to explain the secondary nasals of other words. The remaining word of the group, *fardingale*, *farthingale*, O. Fr. *verdugalle*, entered late. Its inserted *n* (English only) did not come till the sixteenth century, when conformity to a type now so well established would be nearly certain.

*Popinjay* < *popejay*, is another word which may have brought its nasal from Old French, where the insertion appeared in the thirteenth century.<sup>22</sup>

As for the second and larger group of words, in which -ager > -enger, -inger, the earliest to show medial *n* was *messenger*. The latter form appears by the fourteenth century, though Caxton still has *messenger*, which remained current somewhat longer. Added *n* might be analogical here also. *Messenger* might have joined the type of agent-nouns established by *challenger*, a thirteenth century word, *losenger*, liar, flatterer, also an old word, etc. But an interesting and not impossible explanation is as follows: 'The oldest form with *n* cited by Dr. Murray is *messenger* [*messandzer*]. Now the vernacular word, having the same meaning, which *messenger* supplanted was OE., ME. *sand*, connected with *senden*, send. The corruption of *messenger* to *messenger*, through the influence of the native word, is, to the student of processes in modern English dialect forms, no more anomalous than the insertion (see the English list above) of a nasal in *eruption* (*erumption*) through the influence of *rumpus*; or in *apologies* through crossing with *hamper* (*omper*-

<sup>20</sup> See the *Oxford Dictionary*; also Godefroy, *Dictionnaire de l'ancienne française*, under *parivel*, where forms with *n* are noted from as early as the twelfth century.

<sup>21</sup> By Jespersen even in *A Modern English Grammar*, I (1910). So by Mätzner and Skeat earlier.

<sup>22</sup> See the *Oxford Dictionary*; also *papegai* in Godefroy.

*logies*); or in the Shakespearean *porpentine*, which may be a fusion of *porcypine* and *porpoint*;<sup>23</sup> or, to depart from instances involving *m* or *n*, than the Shakespearean *bubukle*, from *bubo* and *carbuncle*, or the many modern dialect forms like *compushency*, from *compulsion* and *push*, or *urgency*.

Beside the establishment of an agent-noun type in *-enger*, *-inger*, likely to enlarge, or to become the basis for new formations,<sup>24</sup> many other influences might have affected special words. Confusion with the suffix of the present participle, to be expected after a nasal was added (compare the occasional *popppingjay*, *yelpingale* < *yaf-fingale*,<sup>25</sup> etc. was also possible, in weakly stressed middle syllables, before the addition; see *skimmington* beside *skimatton*, noted in the discussion of *nightingale*. Vague folk-etymological confusion with *passing* might account, for instance, for the added *n* of the fifteenth century *passyngere*. The group of agent-nouns like *lavender*, *scribender* (Chaucer), *carpenter*, *chavender*, etc., might have affected *cullender* < Lat. *colatore(m)*, *muckinder* < Sp. *mocadero*, etc. Again, confusion with the patronymic suffix may sometimes have been involved, as perhaps in *Birmingham* beside *Brummagem*, OE. *Bromwicham*, *Lelfrington*, from OE. *Leofric*, etc. That, in the course of many centuries, some half dozen or dozen words, after fluctuation, should permanently join types well established by common words, thus becomes an expected thing, rather than something needing special and uniform explanation. The mass of words did not follow *messenger* and *passenger*; compare Chaucer's *homager*, *rummager*; also *forager* (*foringer* in the sixteenth century), *cottager* (*cottinger* in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries), *tillager*, *pillager*, *damager*, *ravager*, *villager*, etc. The safer explanation is that which may apply to single or sporadic cases; not that which should hold with equal force for all words showing the same phonetic conditions.

Associative influence might then account sufficiently for most of the inserted nasals in Middle as in contemporary English.<sup>26</sup> When

<sup>23</sup> See the *Century Dictionary*.

<sup>24</sup> Compare forms like *stuffinger*, *neckinger*, *wedding*, *chaffinger*. Also *Wappinger*, man of Wapping, etc.

<sup>25</sup> *English Dialect Dictionary*.

<sup>26</sup> A few cases of added nasals noted since this article went into print are: *nimbling*,  *nibbling*, "A goat *nimbling* in the bushes," where intrusive *n* appears before *b*, *laventory*, *lavatory*, and *morganantic*, *morganatic*; also the nonce-formation, *champter*, for *chapter*.

we go farther, and seek to establish the exact influences bearing upon each word, we risk the speculative and the fanciful. We are too far from the probation-time of the intrusions to determine with much certainty. Nor, in general, in our treatment of language material, should we try to impose too sharp outlines, or to explain or to group too consistently. Linguistic phenomena never conform wholly to rigid permanent classifications, or tendencies. The delineations merge; the influences at work are shifting. In language, as in the organization of society, everything is bound up with and affected by everything else.

*1911*

## THE ETYMOLOGY OF AN ENGLISH EXPLETIVE

Professor G. P. Krapp makes an attractive case for his derivation of *darn*, *darned* in the brief essay on this word in his recent *The English Language in America*.<sup>1</sup> He discards the usual explanation that *darn* is a variant or minced form of *damn*,<sup>2</sup> and believes that, although it now stands in intimate relation to *damn*, it had an independent origin. He takes as his starting point the Old English adjective *dierne*, 'secret,' Middle English *derne*, Elizabethan *dern*,<sup>3</sup> and assumes a transition from a descriptive adjective or adverb to an imprecation. The adjective took on, he thinks, the form of a participial adjective, and thence developed verbal usage. Our occasional mild *dern* would then represent a more basic form than the commoner *darn*.

The earliest records of *darn*, *darnation* entered by lexicographers come from New England, and Dr. Krapp thinks that these forms are of New England Puritan origin. His last paragraph reads:

<sup>1</sup> Vol. I, 119-26.

<sup>2</sup> Entered in the *Oxford Dictionary*, the *Century*, Weekley's *Etymological Dictionary*, etc.

<sup>3</sup> This is the adjective used by the American poet, Joseph Rodman Drake, in the tenth strophe of *The Culprit Fay* (1835):

'Through dreary beds of tangled fern  
Through groves of nightshade dark and dern,'

In brief then the explanation of *darn*, *darned* is that the word was originally Old English *dierne* which developed as an intensive adjective and adverb. As an adjective *darn* readily took on the form of a participial adjective, just as *addle*, originally an adjective became also *addled*, a participial adjective. From *addled* a finite verb was then formed, as 'to addle one's head over accounts.' So also from *darned* a verb *darn* was derived. As the New England social conscience was tender on this point of swearing it was the most natural thing in the world for the New Englander to secure the necessary relief which an imprecation affords by substituting the already familiar and inoffensive *darn* for the bolder but unequivocally profane word of the vocabulary.

Nevertheless, it is not easy to surrender the conviction that *darn* is no derivative of an adjective or adverb but is somehow to be associated from the first with *damn*, *damnation*. Dr. Krapp's etymology seems to me to be open to question for various reasons. For one thing, the old adjective *derne* seems an unlikely source for an expletive. Looking through Mary Crawford's *English Interjections in the Fifteenth Century*,<sup>4</sup> W. L. Ramsay's list in his edition of Skelton's *Magnyfycence*,<sup>5</sup> E. C. Hills' *Exclamations in American Speech*,<sup>6</sup> I find exhibited in them no tendency for expletives to develop from adjectives and adverbs. The main sources for exclamations, when they are not arbitrary coinages, are verbs and nouns. Dr. Krapp's analogous word *addle* (originally an adjective, becoming *addled* a participial adjective and *addle* a finite verb), to be the perfect analogy that he needs to support his argument, should have become an expletive. It did not and probably never will.

Further, it is of importance, surely, to inquire how Dr. Krapp would relate *darn* the expletive to *darn* meaning 'mend.' The usual etymology of the latter word derives it from Middle English *dierne*, *derne*, and this seems a probable source for it. Are we then to think of the homophone verbs *darn* 'mend' and *darn* the expletive (both seventeenth-century [*darn*]) as identical in origin but diverging in the last two hundred years? This seems hardly likely, and the early occurrences of the two words do not point toward it. Or are we to seek a new etymology for *darn* 'mend'? Assuredly the relationship of the two words should be scrutinized and explained before we appropriate the accepted derivation of the standard word for the dialect word.

<sup>4</sup> *University of Nebraska Studies* 13. 361-405.

<sup>5</sup> *Early English Text Society*, Extra Series 93, p. 83.

<sup>6</sup> *Dialect Notes* 5. 7. 253-84 (1924).

The phonetic difficulties in the way of a derivation of *darn* from *damn* that are pointed out by Dr. Krapp do not seem insuperable if we go back to the period when the pronunciation of *damned* was dissyllabic. There is a simple and convincing way, however, in which the *-rn* of *darn* may be accounted for, and its development placed later than Colonial or even than Puritan times.

The earliest occurrence of *darn* cited by the *Oxford Dictionary* is from 1837-40. Haliburton has 'I guess they are pretty considerable darn fools'.<sup>7</sup> Lowell has *darned* in the *Biglow Papers*<sup>8</sup> and Dickens makes an American say *darn* in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, 'We don't mind them if they come to us in newspapers, but darn your books'.<sup>9</sup> There is no evidence that requires us to go back to Puritan days. *Darn*, so far as it may be documented, sounds like a Yankee rather than a Puritan form. It gained currency rapidly in the first half of the nineteenth century, and by the second half of the century it is in general dialectal and colloquial use, not only for America but for England and Scotland.

The aphetic adjective *tarnal*, used to express abhorrence or disparagement and then merely as an intensive, is familiar to American readers from Lowell's *Biglow Papers*.<sup>10</sup> It was used in the late eighteenth century. The *Oxford Dictionary* cites from 1790. 'The snarl-headed curs fell akicking and cursing at me at such a tarnal rate that . . . I was glad to take to my heels.'<sup>11</sup> Probably *tarnal* derived its original force as an expression of execration from the phrase 'eternal' (etarnal) damnation, out of which came the form *tarnation*, a sort of amalgam of *tarnal* and *damnation*. The first instance of *tarnation* noted in the *Oxford Dictionary* comes, like *tarnal*, from 1790, 'What the rattle makes you look so tarnation glum',<sup>12</sup> and the next from 1801, 'The Americans say, Tarnation seize me or swamp me, if I don't do this or that'.<sup>13</sup> Significant also, for our purpose, is the sentence from the *New England Magazine* (Boston, 1832), 'We have "tarnation" and "darnation" for damnation'.<sup>14</sup> By the last half of the century *tarnation* is in general

<sup>7</sup> T. C. Haliburton, *The Clockmaker*, 1837-1840 (1862), p. 29.

<sup>8</sup> 'You darned old fool.' 1. 145 (1845).

<sup>9</sup> 1843-1844. Ch. xvi.

<sup>10</sup> 'I darsn't skeer the tarnal thing fer fear he'd run away with it.' 2. 1. 72.

<sup>11</sup> R. Tyler. *The Contrast* 2. 2.39 (1837).

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* 5. 1. 88. I am indebted to Professor T. A. Knott for the suggestion that the relation of *tarnation* and *darn* be examined.

<sup>13</sup> G. Hanger, *Life* 2. 151.

<sup>14</sup> 3. 380.



use, not only in America but in England, Scotland, Ireland. Mrs. Carlyle, for example, writes of 'tarnation folly'.<sup>15</sup> Parallels would be lacking for the voicing for phonetic reasons of *tarnation* (with its *r* from *tarnal*) to *darnation*, but an explanation may be found in contamination. The influence of *damnation* itself, after *tarnation* had been formed, would explain *darnation*, the form with initial *d* that was eventually to be the more popular form. From *darnation* it is easy to derive the verb *darn* and the participial adjective *darned*.

The earliest citations in the *Oxford Dictionary* of *tarnal* and *tarnation* take us into the eighteenth century. They antedate by some decades the appearance of *darn*, which is first adduced from Haliburton's *Sam Slick*, 1837-40; and this may well be taken into account. Nothing very decisive may be learned from the order of their appearance, for all come into view within a half-century. It is clear, however, that in the association of *tarnal* and *damnation* may be found another and an adequate explanation of the *rn* of *darn*, the sounds viewed as a stumbling block by Dr. Krapp and underlying his advocacy of a derivation from the old adjective *dern*. It is clear also that we need not go back to Old or Middle English, or to the Elizabethans, or even to the Puritans, if we accept, as explaining our popular expletive, the sequence: *tarnal damnation*, *tarnation*, *darnation* (with its *d* from *damnation*), *darn*, *darned*. By this route we are brought back to an association from the first of *darn* and *damn*. But we proceed from an aphetic adjective and an amalgam-noun expletive, and we move forward the origin of the expression to a period nearer to our own.

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<sup>15</sup> *Letters*, 1857 (1883) 11. 329.

## WORD-COINAGE AND MODERN TRADE-NAMES

### I.

All the world seems to feel at liberty at the present time to coin words for use as trade-names, generally without regard for orthodox methods of word-creation, or for the general linguistic acceptability of the term thus brought into being. No doubt the widespread present-day freedom in the handling of language, especially in the launching of new words or the modification of old, derives to some extent from our increased self-consciousness regarding speech and its processes. To this self-consciousness many sources have contributed, e. g., the greater attention given to the study of language in the schools, the growth of interest in etymology, emphasis on word-analysis and word-comparisons, and the agitation of the spelling reformers. The general desire of the projectors of new trade-names is to hit upon something that will impress itself on the memory of prospective buyers of their goods. The sole test of a proposed word seems to be its effectiveness as advertising. Beyond dispute, an apt or a striking name for a newly invented article will go far to promote sales. It would seem that hardly any ingenious device has escaped being pressed into service, whether it concern word- or syllable-combinations; there are all manner of shortenings and extensions, diminutives, arbitrary new formations, fancy or

phonetic spellings, striking hyphenations, and novel capitalizings. One type of trade-name much in vogue at present, that created by the process known as "blending," no doubt owes its success, in whole or in part, to the popularity of the "portmanteau word" passage in Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass*, where the author illustrates the convenience of making one word serve the purpose of several by the process of telescoping them into one, e. g., *galumphing*, from *galloping* and *triumphing*, *mimsy* from *miserable* and *flimsy*. Where Carroll showed the way, in the free usage of suggestive factitious words, throngs have followed,—coiners of trade-names, of personal names, names for new towns, for horticultural novelties, for hybrid animals, and those untrammelled creators of new words, mostly jocular in nature, the newspaper writers and cartoonists. Coinage by deliberate blending, the latter sometimes simple, sometimes intricate, is however but one method of the many now in vogue. A glance through the older files of magazines—those store-houses *par excellence* of advertisements, in their variety and evanescence—makes clear the fact that for range and ingenuity of linguistic device and utter freedom in the manipulation or distortion of word and phrase the present period is peculiar to itself.

The survey of this present-day tendency that here follows makes no pretense at being complete; it is meant to sketch main lines only. Many of the words entered will have outlived their currency by the time this article is printed. The material under discussion is fluctuating in character; and an exhaustive canvass of contemporary forms, even if that stupendous undertaking were possible, would be unprofitable. Trade-names have in general only passing significance for the student of language; but some words in commercial terminology win their way into the dictionary language with the standardization of the article which called forth the name. So with the coinages that designate the various inventions of Edison, or with the blend forms *electrolier* or *gasalier*. By the time such recognition has been attained, the character of the word's origin is generally lost from view. Some analysis or registration of the modes of formation prevailing at the present time, and of the chief classes which may be distinguished, should therefore be of interest and value. Vogue in trade-names changes as in everything else; a striking creation of some novel type calls forth similar creations

in its wake; here as elsewhere, established models govern, and imitation plays its inevitable rôle.

Most of the illustrative matter cited in the following pages belongs to the year 1912-1913, although a part was drawn from advertising matter of a decade ago. An exception is the material dealt with first. Here chronological limits are not observed and there is more attempt at completeness. Scientific nomenclatures, names for electrical or engineering appliances, and the like, are left out of account in the material here presented. For the collection of most of the trade-coinages cited the author is indebted to the interest of various friends and students.

## II. TRADE-TERMS FROM PROPER NAMES AND PLACE-NAMES

Not strictly "coinages" are trade-names arising from the use of the surname of some inventor or manufacturer, or derived from the name of some celebrity, or from some place-name; nevertheless they deserve treatment in the discussion of word-creation in commercial nomenclature. They become new words in the sense that they lose their original force as proper or place-names and assume recognized meaning as names of things. They are likely to differ from other trade-names in that they less often are deliberately fixed upon and launched in their new meaning with the first appearance of the article so designated; their currency arises gradually, through association. To cite examples from place-names, **worsted** was first manufactured at an English village of that name. Other similar names for fabrics are **worcester**, a fine grade of woolen cloth, **calico**, **cambric**, **kersey**, **mechlin**. Many varieties of wines take their names from places. Most interesting among these is **sherry**, originally shipped from Xeres in Spain, the Roman *Caesaris urbs*. Among wines named from places or districts are **catawba**, **chablis**, **bordeaux**, **madeira**, **burgundy**. **Tabasco**, the sauce, takes its name from a river and state in Mexico. From place, proper and baptismal names come the designations of the vehicles **berlin**, **brougham**, **landau**, **victoria**; for the articles of apparel, **mackintosh**, **spencer**, **windsor**, **albert**, **brunswick**, **bluchers**, **bal-morals**; of the gladstone (bag); of **gorgonzola**, **camembert**, **edam**, and **gloucester** cheeses, of **Havana** and **Manila** cigars; of the plant **wistaria**, of the **minorca** fowl, of the **mauser** rifle, called after its German inventor. From names also come the trade terms **buhl**,

**faience**, **filbert**, **satsuma**, and the facetious term for potato, "**murphy**." Among words derived from surnames, **daguerreotype** took its name from its French inventor; **sandwich** is so called from an eighteenth century earl of that name who was in the habit of having what are now termed sandwiches brought him at the gaming table. The antiseptic solution **listerine** was named after Sir Joseph Lister; it has the derivatives **listerism** and **listerize**. To **mercerize**, i. e., to give a special treatment to cotton fabrics, is so called after the English calico printer who introduced the process.

Some nineteenth-century American commercial terms originating from surnames are the following:

**barlow**, or barlow knife. A certain type of one-bladed jack-knife, named from its American maker. **bloomers**, a costume worn by American women in gymnasium practice, so called after Mrs. Amelia Bloomer, who sought to introduce them. **bowie**, or bowie knife. A knife with a blade of a certain fixed shape, so called after its inventor, Colonel James Bowie. **davenport**, a kind of large square settee, so called from the name of some maker. **derringer**, a short barrelled pocket pistol of a large caliber, named after the inventor. **maverick**, an unbranded animal, generally a calf, claimed by the one branding it: said to be named after a Texas owner who did not brand his cattle. **maxim**, a machine gun named after its inventor, Hiram Maxim.

The derivation of trade-terms directly from proper names or place-names is at the present time not very frequent.

### III. SHORTENINGS AND EXTENSIONS

One of the commonest methods employed in the contemporary creation of new commercial terms is to shorten, to extend, or to modify, generally according to some pattern already set, words descriptive in a telling way of the article to be named. Patterns fluctuate more or less in popularity, and endings are various. At present, **-o**, little in use not long ago, seems to be held in special favor. This is due in part, it would seem, to recent Spanish-American influences; though in some instances the model may have been set by older terms. In addition to those cited below, many other coinages showing the **-o** suffix are listed under hyphenated names (VII) and under blends (IX).

**Alabasco** wall paint, made at Grand Rapids, Michigan. **Indestructo** baggage, i. e., trunks and suit cases, made at Mishewaka,

Indiana. **Dependo** gasoline gauge, made at Hopedale, Massachusetts. Dixon's **Eterno** lead pencil, made at Jersey City, New Jersey. **Formo** Foot Lotion made at Omaha, Nebraska. **W. B. Reduso** corsets. The **Perfecto** cigar. **Perfetto** sugar wafers, made by the Loose-Wiles Biscuit Company, Boston. The **Santo** vacuum cleaner. **Excello** shirts "for fit and comfort." **Reflecto** furniture polish made at Chicago. The **Porto** portable marine engine, made by the Waterman company, Detroit, Michigan. **Resisto** traveller case, made at Newark, New Jersey.

Here may be included the picturesque names launched in 1913 by the Hotpoint Electric Company of Ontario, California:

**El Perco** (percolator). **El Teballo**. **El Chafo** (chafing dish). **El Bako**. **El Eggo**. **El Comfo**. **El Boilo**. **El Stovo**. **El Tosto** (for toasting). **El Tostovo**.

The same suffix, *-o*, separated by a hyphen, capitalized, and associating itself with the interjection, appears in:

**Jell-O** Ice Cream Powder, made by the Genesee Pure Food Company, LeRoy, New York; and **Glad-O** for inflamed feet, made at Lincoln, Nebraska.

The following names are made by the use of standard suffixes, largely on the model of chemical terms:

**Alabastine** wall tint, made at Grand Rapids, Michigan. **Orangeine** powders for fatigue, made at Chicago. **Roseine** oil, also **Polarine** lubricating oil, made by the Standard Oil Company. **Murine** eye remedy, made at Chicago. **Malt-Nutrine** predigested food, made at St. Louis. **Pearline** washing compound, made at New York City.

**Sanitol** tooth powder. **Resinol** for the skin. **Dentinol**, a prescription for the teeth, made at New York City. **Odol**, "the safeguard for the teeth," made at New York City.

**Iron Jelloids** (English) "unequaled for anæmia." **Parafied plas-toid** jelly "works real wonders." **Feltoid** casters and tips, made at Bridgeport, Connecticut.

Other popular present-day suffixes are illustrated by the following:

**Dee-odora** deodorant, made at Long Island City. **Slendora** cigars, made at Wheeling, West Virginia. **Adora** dessert confection, made by the National Biscuit Company.

**Divinia** (English) the "favorite perfume." **Luxuria** cold cream, made by Harriet Hubbard Ayres. **Pureoxia** Lemon Soda, made at Boston.

**Grafonola**, made by the Columbia Phonograph Company. **Pianola**, a certain type of piano player. **Victrola**, made by the Victor Phonograph Company. **Shinola** shoe polish. **Sanola** bath-fixtures. A variant of this suffix appears in the **Virtuolo** piano player.

**Calculagraph**, an invention to make records for marking the time of employees. The **Protectograph** check writer, made at Rochester, New York.

Also popular at present are the suffixes *-ox* (*Canthrox*, *Hydrox*, *Asparox*, *Calox*) and *-tex* (*Hy-Tex*, *Wooltex*, *Stone-Tex*, *Aertex*, etc.); but the trade-names showing these are grouped to better advantage elsewhere.

#### IV. DIMINUTIVES

The diminutive suffixes *-let* and *-ette* are now much in favor. Occasionally, in modern commercial use, the latter ending has the pejorative force of 'imitation' or 'sham,' as in *leatherette*, imitation leather for upholstery, or *Brussellette* carpet, but ordinarily the force is merely diminutive.

**Wheatlet**, "monarch of cereals." The Franklin Company, Lockport, New York. **Catarlets**, antiseptic tablets; also **Dyspeplets**, made by the C. I. Hood Company, Lowell, Massachusetts. **Chiclets** chewing gum, made by the Sen-Sen Chiclet Company, New York.

The Strathmore **Cellarette**, The Strathmore Shops, Cleveland, Ohio. **Crispette** popcorn balls, made at Lincoln, Nebraska. The **Premoette** Camera, made by the Eastman Company, Rochester, New York. The **Kitchenette** ice-cream freezer. **Ripplette**, a kind of seersucker cloth. **Milkettes**, a variety of confectionery, made at Bloomington, Illinois. **Toasterettes**, made by the Johnson Educator Company, Boston.

#### V. COMPOUNDS

For the names of many articles, striking compounds are formed, describing or eulogizing that which is to be designated. The elements in such names are not new, but the combination is new; or the combination in its appearance as a distinct word. Some further examples of compounds are listed under names showing disguised or fancy spellings (VI), and under hyphenated forms (VII).

**Palmolive** soap, made at Milwaukee, Wisconsin. **Waxit** floor finish, made at Minneapolis. **Underfeed** Warm Air Furnaces "cut coal bills," made at Cincinnati, Ohio. **Shawknit** stockings, made

at Lowell, Massachusetts. **Holeproof** guaranteed hosiery. **Never-out** Mirror Lens Searchlight, made at Philadelphia. **Spear-mint** chewing gum, made at Chicago. **Aromint** (arrow) chewing gum, made at Cincinnati, Ohio. **Walkover** shoes. **Fitform** clothes. **Clothcraft** clothes. **Willowcraft** furniture, made at North Cambridge, Massachusetts. **Safecraft** desk, buffet, bookcase, sewing table, made at the Craftsman Workshops, Syracuse, New York. **Meadowgold** butter, made by the Beatrice Creamery Company, Nebraska. **Fatoff** "for fat folks," made by M. S. Borden, New York. **Wardwove** linen paper, sold at Ward's, Boston.

## VI. NAMES SHOWING DISGUISED OR FANCY SPELLINGS

More popular than the preceding class are names formed by much the same manner of composition but spelled in simplified, disguised or ingeniously modified ways, likely to make them more rememberable. An effective pioneer among names of this class is *Uneeda* biscuit (*Unceda* cigar in England) made by the National Biscuit Company, followed by *Takhoma* biscuit, made by the same Company, followed by *Partaka* biscuit. Manipulation of spelling, as a device to catch the eye, is also used in such advertisements as "Keen Kutter Cutlery," or "Klossmans Klean Klothess Klean"; but these fall outside the province of this paper, since they involve no creation of new terms.

Here belong:

The products of the **Prest-O-Lite** Company of Indianapolis, for autos, buggies, motors, etc. The **Uneedme** chair pad. **Dalite** alarm clocks, made at St. Louis. **Ritehite** trunks. **Holsum** bread. The (English) **Phiteezi** boots. **Fits-U** eyeglasses, made at Southbridge, Massachusetts. **Shure-on** eyeglasses. Armour's **Veribest** food specialties, Chicago. **Noxall** paint, made at Chicago. Atlas **E.Z.Seal Jars**, made at Wheeling, West Virginia. **Nuklene** for shoe whitening, made at Omaha. **Shuwhite** Cream, for cleaning shoes, made at Chicago. **Porosknit** underwear, made at Amsterdam, New York. **U-Kan** plate, "brightens metal plate," made at Philadelphia. **Trufit** shoes, made at Boston. **Wilcut** knives, made at Reading, Pennsylvania. **Trilene** tablets (English) to cure fat people. **Rubifoam** dentifrice, made at Lowell, Massachusetts. **Staylit** matches. **Nulife** belt and brace company, C. Munter, New York City. **Maidrite** lighting fixtures, sold by the Le Roque-Amsden Company. **Bestyette** Raincoats, made at New York City. **Kno-Burn** Metal Lath, made at Chicago. **Hy-Tex** (high texture?) face brick, sold at Lincoln, Nebraska. **Ozasure** air purifier, made by the Ozone Company, Niagara Falls, New York. **Kisselkar**, Kissel Motor Car Company, Kissel Avenue, Hartford, Wisconsin.



**E.Z.Walker Shoes.** **Flistikon** "catches the flies," Schieffelin and Company, New York City. **U-All-No** After Dinner Mint, made at Philadelphia.

## VII. HYPHENATIONS.

Names strikingly hyphenated are especially likely to catch the eye, and may be formed in various ways. They include shortenings, hybrid forms, and blends. In addition to the examples given below many may be found under blends (VIII), under shortenings and extensions (III), and under miscellaneous formations (XII). A few terms cited here are repeated under other groupings. Hyphenated names appear to be at the height of their vogue at the present time.

**Fab-Rik-O-Na** Woven Wall Coverings, including **Art-Ko-Na** burlap, **Kord-Ko-Na** canvas, etc., made by H. B. Wiggins' Sons Company, Bloomfield, New Jersey. **Chi-Namel**, made by the Ohio Varnish Company, Cleveland. **Ka-Tar-No** remedy for coughs, colds, and catarrh, made by the Ka-Tar-No Company, Columbus, Ohio. **Bath-Eucryl** soap (English), one ingredient of which is probably eucalyptus. **Talk-o-phone** machine for disc records, made at Toledo, Ohio. **Pen-Dar** Steel Lockers, made by Ed. Darby and Sons Company, Philadelphia. **Jap-a-Lac** floor varnish, made by the Glidden Varnish Company of Cleveland, Ohio. **Lin-Co-Lac** varnish, made by the Lincoln, Nebraska, Paint and Color Company. The **Pneu-Vac** cleaner. **Me-Too** Mints. **Hy-Rib** Concrete Roofs, made by the Trussed Concrete Steel Company, Detroit, Michigan. **Pept-Iron** Pills "chocolate-coated," C. I. Hood Company, Lowell, Massachusetts. **Malt-Nutrine** "predigested food in liquid form," made at St. Louis. **Flex-a-Tile** Asphalt Shingles, made by the Heffles Company, Chicago. **Pro-phy-lac-tic** tooth brush, made at Florence, Massachusetts. Cook's **Malto-Rice**, made by the American Rice Food and Manufacturing Company, New Jersey. The **Auto-Valet** "combines the wardrobe and closet, the chiffonier, dresser, and shaving stand in one piece," Berkey and Gay Furniture Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan. **Hy-Tex** face brick, sold at Lincoln, Nebraska. **Vel-Ve-Ta** wall paint. **Vapo-Cresolene** "cures while you sleep, whooping cough, croup," etc.

## VIII. BLENDS.

These play a notably important part in the current naming of articles in trade. The creation of some type or another of blend-name seems to be one of the devices first coming to the mind of those needing new terms. The vogue of blends in commercial

terminology is comparatively recent, and their currency may prove not very stable; although a few names so formed, like *electrolier*, may win recognition in the dictionary language, with the standardization of the articles which they designate. Blending is now an orthodox method for the formation of names of compounds in chemistry and other sciences, e. g., *chloroform*, *formaldehyde*, *dextrose*, *bromal*, *zincode*.

For most of the blends cited below, the parent words are too obvious to need indication:

**electrolier**, a chandelier-like support for electric lights. **gasalier**, a certain type of gas-lamp, a gas-chandelier. **spendicator**, a device for indicating expenses. **Jap-A-Lac**, a varnish, made at Cleveland, Ohio: from *Japanese* and *shellac*, or *lacquer*. **Everlastik**, i. e., everlasting elastic, made at Boston. **Cuticura** skin remedy: from *cuticle* and *cure*. The Gem **Damaskeene** razor. **Polpasta**, a polishing paste for manicurists, made at New York. **Choralcelo**, an organ-like musical instrument, giving orchestral effects, made in Boston. **Frolaset**, name coined for a certain make of front-laced corset. **Locomobile**, automobile, made at Bridgeport, Connecticut: from *automobile* and *locomotive*, or *locomotion*. **Pneu-Vac**, a certain type of vacuum cleaner. **Colax**, medical preparation, from *colon* and *laxative*. **Autocar**, made at Ardmore, Pennsylvania: from *automobile* and *car*. **Polmet** for polishing metal, made at Boston. **Carbolisoap**, named from *soap* and *carbolic*. **Sealpackerchief**, a sealed package of pocket handkerchiefs, made at New York City. **Parowax**, "pure refined paraffine," made by the Standard Oil Company. **Sani-Genic** mop, etc., made at Cincinnati, Ohio: from *sanitary* and *hygienic*.

Perhaps better classified as agglutinations of contiguous words, or solidifications, than as blends proper, are names such as:

**Crudol** hair preparation: from *crude oil*. **Antexema** skin remedy: from *anti-eczema*. **Mobiloil**, for automobiles, made by the Vacuum Oil Company, of Rochester, New York. **Fordorn** electric auto-horns, made at St. Louis, "for Ford cars only."

## IX. BLENDS BUILT FROM NAMES

Not so common a decade or more ago but in high favor at present are terms built from the names of the men forming a company, or from the name of the company itself, or the name of the city or the district which is the location of the manufacture. A pioneer venture of this type was the *Nabisco* wafer, made by the National Biscuit Company, the success of which probably set the

type for similar formations. The same method of word-coinage has present-day vogue in the creation of personal names and names for new towns.<sup>1</sup>

**Ansko** cameras, made by the Anthony and Scoville Company, Binghamton, New York. **Aplco** Electric Starter, also the Aplco lighting system, made by the Apple Electric Company, Dayton, Ohio. **Balopticon**, made by the Bausch and Lomb Optical Company, Rochester, New York. **Clupeco** collar, made by the Cluett, Peabody Company, Troy, New York. **Laca-Tan** leather, made by the Lackawanna Leather Company, "foremost tanners of America." **Lin-Co-Lac** varnish, made by the Lincoln, Nebraska, Paint and Color Company. **Delco** equipment for electric cranking, etc., made by the Dayton Engineering Laboratories Company, Dayton, Ohio. **Natco** Hollow Tile, made by the National Fire Proofing Company, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. **Kencico** cigar, made by the L. R. Kent Company, South Bend, Indiana. **Nosco** table salt, sold by the National Onion Company. **Texaco** Motor Oil, made by the Texas Company, Houston, Texas. **Kel-Le-Ko** coffee, made by the D. Kelley Company, Columbus, Ohio. **Pen-Dar** Steel Lockers, made by Ed. Darby and Sons Company, Philadelphia. **Adlake** cameras, made by the firm of Adams and Westlake. **Oldsmobile**, automobile designed by R. E. Olds, Olds Motor Works, Detroit. **Hupmobile**, automobile made by the Hupp Motor Car Company. **Calspar** varnish, made by Valentine and Company, New York City. **Iseeco** cigars, made by the Isenberg Cigar Company, Wheeling, West Virginia. **Wisco** athletic shoes, made by the Wisconsin Shoe Company. **Stanvar** wood finish, made by the Standard Varnish Works, Chicago. **Remtico** type-writer supplies, made by the Remington Company.

#### X. TRADE-NAMES BUILT FROM INITIALS

Sometimes employed, when the result makes a usable word, is the method of building new terms from the initials of a maker, or inventor, or of the company engaged in manufacture. There are probably many terms so built; but they are not always easy to recognize, especially by those unfamiliar with the inventor's or the manufacturer's name, or with the story of the naming. A few illustrations are these:

The **Reo** automobile, made by the R. E. Olds Company, known as the Reo Motor Car Company, of Lansing, Michigan. Olds was also the designer of the Oldsmobile. **Sebco** extension drills, made

<sup>1</sup> See the present writer's *Blends: Their Relation to English Word-Formation* (IV). Heidelberg. 1913.

by the Star Expansion and Bolt Company. **Pebeco** tooth powder, made by P. Beiersdorf and Company, Hamburg, Germany. **Reeco** Water Systems, the Rider-Ericsson Company, New York.

## XI. ARBITRARY NEW FORMATIONS

The following names are mostly meaningless. They appear to be arbitrary creations rather than modifications or combinations of older words. The stock example of an invented word is *gas*, created by the discoverer of gas, Van Helmont; and many of the words listed here may be no less arbitrarily coined. Others may in reality be built from elements in existing words, although the words are not easily identified. They may be blends or compounds, in origin, although not recognizable as such to those ignorant of their history. Several show suffixes (-o, -ox) now in especial vogue.

**Kodak**, term now popularly applied to almost any kind of camera but originally a trade-mark name of the Eastman Kodak Company. **Osoko** dog food, made at Cardiff, England. **Tiz**, preparation for inflamed feet. **Sundae**, a name now in established usage for college ices. **Kryptok** lenses for spectacles and eyeglasses. **Karsi** Sandalwood Toilet Soap, made by the J. B. Williams Company. **Krit**, or **K-R-I-T** automobile. **Clysmic** table water, from Waukesha, Wisconsin. **Cremex** (English) shampoo powder for the scalp. **Rev-O-Noc** tennis racquets. **Canthrox** shampoo preparation, made at Chicago. **Zu Zu** ginger snaps.

The following arbitrary creations are based on or recall certain standard words, vernacular or borrowed:

**Trot-Moc** Back-To-Nature shoes, made at Marlborough, Massachusetts (trot? moccasin?). **Crisco** (from crisp?) for frying, made by the Procter and Gamble Company. **Festino** dessert sweet, made by the National Biscuit Company. **Asparox** for sauce "has a delicious Asparagus flavor"; made by Armour, Chicago. **Holophane** Globes and Reflectors, made at New York (hollow?). **Calox** dentifrice, "The Oxygen does it"; made at New York. **Postum** cereal, made at Battle Creek, Michigan. **Vivil** peppermint pepsin, made at Baltimore.

## XII. MISCELLANEOUS FORMATIONS

The following terms, of various patterns, may be grouped together for convenience; although they have little in common save their factitious quality. Some might be classed among hyphenated forms, or among compounds, or blends, and many are as meaning-

less as those included under the preceding section. Several are hybrids of two languages.

**Tarvia** (tar and Latin *via*?) to preserve roads, made by the Barrett Manufacturing Company, New York. **Luxeberry** wood finish, made by Berry Brothers, New York. **Aerolux** porch shades. **Aertex** Cellular Shirts and Underwear (English). **Colorite** straw renovator, made at Boston. The Aeolian **orchestrelle**, of Aeolian Hall, London. **Wheatena** breakfast food. **Dentyne** chewing gum, for the teeth. **Limetta**, a drink for sale at soda fountains. **Stone-Tex** liquid cement coating, made at the Trus-Con (trussed concrete) laboratories, Detroit. **Wooltex** (texture?) garments. **Tris-cuit**, made by the Natural Food Company, Niagara Falls, New York. **Rozane** Pottery, made by the Roseville Pottery Company, Zanesville, Ohio. **Oxydonor** "drives away disease of every form," made at New York. **Dentacura** for teeth and gums, made at Newark, New Jersey. **Peptomint** Chewing Gum. **Laxacold** remedy for La Grippe. **O-Cedar** polish for furniture, made at Chicago.

### XIII.

Peculiar to the later nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries, the "florescence-time" for advertising in the worlds' history, is such untrammelled and prolific invention of trade terms, such variety and abundance of coinage, as the foregoing pages have exemplified. It may be of interest to recall in contrast the general style of commercial nomenclature prevailing in the eighteenth century, when advertising was in its infancy, and to note the divergence between that period and our own in the name-seeker's idea of what might be counted upon to have popular appeal. The following specimens of eighteenth century trade-names are from advertisements in the *Spectator*.<sup>2</sup> They show no arbitrarily invented words, unless the not illegitimate *Jatropoton*, presumably from the name of the botanical genus *Jatropha*. The motley and audacious terms of our own day seem capricious and undignified indeed, alongside the formal designations created by our ancestors. There is approximately the same difference in the taste of the two centuries in commercial terms that exists between the prose manner of writers like O. Henry and his followers and that of the authors of the *De Coverley* Papers.

<sup>2</sup> Accessible in Lawrence Lewis's *The Advertisements of the Spectator*. Boston, 1909. See especially the "Specimen Advertisements" in the Appendix.

R. Stoughton's great Cordial Elixir, famous throughout Europe.—The famous Italian Water for Dying Red and Grey Hairs . . . Brown or Black.—The famous Spanish Blacking for Gentlemen's Shoes.—Famous Drops for Hypochondriack Melancholy.—An Admirable Confect, which assuredly cures Stuttering or Stammering in Children or grown Persons.—An assured Cure for Leanness.—Angelick Snuff: The most noble Composition in the World, removing all manner of disorders of the Head and Brain.—An Incomparable pleasant Tincture to restore the Sense of Smelling.—Doctor Coleburt's most famous Elixir, and Salt of Lemmons, which have effected such surprizing Cures in all Distempers.—Consumptions of all sorts radically Cured by a famous Elixir.—The most excellent Chymical Balsam, which infallably cures the Gout or any rheumatick Pains.—Daffy's Elixir Salutis, a most pleasant and successful cordial Drink.—Whereas the Viper has been a Medicine approv'd by the Physicians of all Nations; there is now prepar'd the Volatil Spirit Compound of it, a Preparation altogether new . . . the most Sovereign Remedy against all Faintings, Swoonings, Lowness of Spirits, Vapours, etc.—Jatropoton, or a most grateful and wholesome Corrective of all noxious Aigre.—Instant Cure for Diseases of the Nerves . . . by a Cephalick Tincture.—Celebrated Vapour Tincture, so deservedly famous for curing Vapours, Melancholy, Hyppo, Dizziness, etc.—Cephalic Tincture so long celebrated for curing Convulsions, Apoplexies, Palsies, Head-Pains, Vapours, and all Nervous Distempers.—The Delightful Chymical Liquor for the Breath, Teeth, and Gums.—Incomparable Perfuming Drops for Handkerchiefs.—The Royal Chymical Wash-Ball for the Hands and face.—The Incomparable Powder for cleaning the teeth.—The great Reputation of the English Barrel Soap amongst the Quality and Gentry.—The best Barbadoes Cittron Water, to be sold at John's Coffee-house.

Our present-day coinages, curtailments, and distortions would no doubt have inspired among our ancestors only amazement and distrust of the articles so named. Which of them would have bought *Takhoma* or *Partaka* Biscuit, or have put *Fab-Rik-O-Na* or *Art-Ko-Na* upon his walls, or have worn *Phiteezi* or *E.Z.Walker* shoes, or have wished for food cooked upon *El Comfo*, or *El Tostovo*? Ingenious or audacious names seem rather to amuse or to attract us than to inspire any lack of confidence in the articles so labelled. We constantly need designations for new articles of dress, of food, of house-furnishing, and the like; and now, as in the days of the *Spectator*, we have advertisements of novel medicines and remedies of all kinds, for which extravagant claims are made. But the "drops" and "cordials" and "tinctures" and "elixirs" which our ancestors craved are now out of favor. Such names are too conventional to prove effective upon the posters, or the signs, or in the columns of newspapers, of the twentieth century. Ours—so long as present vogue continues—seems to be word-creation or word-manipulation,

as it were, with the lid off. Where our ancestors were content with conservatism and monotony, the present day reveals a fluctuating and bewildering variety of commercial terms without apparent limits of kind or quantity.

*1912*

## ON INDEFINITE COMPOSITES AND WORD-COINAGE

Recognition of "blending" as a mode of word-formation, the telescoping of two or more words into one, as it were, or the superposition of one word upon another, is not new among etymologists. The subject has not yet had separate or elaborate treatment, however. Some American instances of these factitious amalgam forms, the "portmanteau words" of Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass*, the blend or fusion forms of etymologists or lexicographers, are *dumbfound* from *dumb* and *confound*, *dang* from *damn* and *hang*, *gerrymander* from Elbridge Gerry and *salamander*, *electrocute* from *electric* and *execute*. Probably *boost* from *boom* and *hoist*, *lunch* from *lump* and *hunch*, *luncheon* from *lunch* and the now obsolete *nuncheon* have similar factitious origin; also numerous mongrel slang or dialect forms, often jocular in intention, such as the American *slantendicular*, *solemncholy*, *happenstance*, *grandificent*, *sweatspiration*, or the English dialectal *rasparated*, *boldacious*, *boldrumpitious*. Blend forms have been noted for French, German, and other European languages, and probably have an antiquity which it would be futile to try to trace. Wiclif and other writers, from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century, use *austern*, a composite of *austere* and *stern*; Shakespeare uses *bubukle* from *bubo* and *carbuncle*, and *porpentine*, which may be a crossing of *porcupine* and *porpoint*. Undoubtedly many such forms have won



acceptance, from time to time, in the history of the language. In most cases, they would be difficult to solve, after use long enough for the striking or whimsical quality which gave them vogue to become dimmed.

Nevertheless it is safe to affirm that factitious blends are being made with the greatest frequency, and have their widest diffusion, at the present time.<sup>1</sup> For one thing, the modern trend toward conscious analysis of language, the persistent interest in etymology, and the increased knowledge of the processes of word-formation, have led to increased self-consciousness in the handling of language. They have brought greater relish of peculiar or characteristic usages, and hence more effort—sometimes desperate and varied effort—to reach new linguistic effects. Other factors that may have helped to give special impetus to the present inclination toward fusion forms are: the popularization of writing of all kinds through the spread of education and the multiplication of readers; the creation of a class of professional humorous, or semi-humorous writers, mainly journalistic; and the growth of realism, which has swept into print a mass of dialect forms, whimsical, perverted, and fantastic, such as never crossed the linguistic horizon of the average reader of a hundred years ago. Especially frequent of creation at present, and accepted in standing, are blend-formations in scientific nomenclature, as *chloroform*, or *formaldehyde*, and designations created for various newly invented articles in trade, as *Nabisco* wafers, made by the National Biscuit Company, *Sealpackerchief*, for a sealed package of pocket handkerchiefs, *Pneu-Vac*, for a vacuum cleaner, or *Locomobile*, for a certain variety of automobile.

But there has not been recognition, at least not specific or definitely formulated recognition, of the fact that vague or indefinite blending exists as a mode of word-formation alongside the more obvious and intentional amalgamation which has challenged and monopolized attention hitherto. The suggestion may be speculative or conjectural, rather than concretely demonstrable; but the hypothesis here put forward, if valid, sheds light in a few dark corners of the etymological field. The most usual modes of creating folk-words at the present time are through imitation of natural

<sup>1</sup> In a forthcoming study entitled *Blends: Their Relation to English Word-Formation*, to be issued in the *Anglistische Forschungen* series, 1914, the author expects to illustrate fully their vogue and the frequency of their coinage at the present time, and to note their various usages and characteristics.

sounds, as *fizz*, *kersplash*, *chug-chug*; through analogical extension or enlargement, as *judgmatical* or *splendiferous*; through curtailments, like *bus* from *omnibus*, *auto* from *automobile*; through the creation of new words from proper names, as *mercerize*, *mackintosh*, *pasteurize*, *boycott*, and the like. Alongside these familiar methods of language creation or modification, many words peculiarly perplexing to etymologists probably originate in a sort of indefinite or eclectic fusion of certain vaguely recollected words, groups of words, or elements in words, already existing in the language. Nor is it unlikely that echoic composites of this class may equal or outrank, in number and importance, the more intentional and recognizable fusion forms which have hitherto attracted the attention of linguists.

The process of word-coinage which for expediency in classifying the words involved or in characterizing their manner of origin I have called in this paper *indefinite blending*, or *reminiscent amalgamation*, borders not only upon blending or fusion proper (definite blends of few and easily recognizable elements are likelier to be of conscious formation and to retain unimpaired the potency in implication of their various elements) but also upon *onomatopoeia*, or direct imitation of natural sounds, and upon the *unconscious symbolism of sounds*.<sup>2</sup> The latter arises partly from the nature of the sounds themselves; for example from the difference in suggestive power between open or close, high or low vowels; the difference in the quality of certain consonant combinations; the difference between explosives and continuants, or between voiced consonants and voiceless. Poets in particular are likely to avail themselves of this principle to attain what is called "tone color." But the symbolism may also arise or find its suggestive power, partly through association with familiar established words in which these sounds occur. The subtle suggestion of combinations of letters is a subject as yet little investigated.

To proceed to specific illustration, it is obvious that certain consonant groups are likely to retain the associations of prominent words in which they are found; as the initial *sq-* of *squeeze*, *squelch*, *squirt*, *squirm*, may unconsciously convey the idea of impetus or

<sup>2</sup> For a suggestive passage on the symbolism of sounds, having some bearing on the matter under discussion, see L. P. Smith, *The English Language*, pp. 102-105 (1912). But see especially H. Bradley, *The Making of English*, pp. 156-159 (1904).

motion, rather violent motion, perhaps. The final *-sh* of *crush*, *crash*, *splash*, *wash*, *gush*, *dash*, *squash*, *mash*, *swash*, etc., also suggests motion, in this case motion which is continuous, as symbolized by the final fricative. The factitious English and American *squish*,<sup>3</sup> or *squush*, and the English *squish*, which have these sounds, may be direct blendings, the one of *squeeze* and *crush*, the other of *squeeze* and *swish*; but it seems more likely that they are indefinite or eclectic composites, which derive their suggestive power from the associations or symbolism of their prominent elements. *Squish* is defined in Wright's *English Dialect Dictionary* as used in the sense of *squeeze*, *squirt*, *squash*, *gush*, *mash*, and these words, vaguely recollected, may well have entered into its composition. Similarly, take the case of the initial *sn-* of *sniff*, *snout*, *snuff*, *sneeze*, *snore*, etc., words associated with the nose, or the sense of smell. The fairly recent *snuzzle*, now admitted into the dictionaries, may be a combination of this *sn-* with the ending of *nuzzle*, *muzzle*, *guzzle*; although *snuzzle* might be solved as a direct blend of *snuff* and *nuzzle*; or merely as the latter word with the adscititious initial *s*. The factitious *slosh*, also admitted to the dictionaries, gains probably from the associations or symbolism of the group, *slush*, *gush*, *wash*, *splash*, etc. The occasionally appearing *squdged*,<sup>4</sup> or *squudged*, implies *squeeze*, *crush*, *crowd*, *scrouge*, and the like.

In general it is obvious that in words so formed there would arise a feeling of natural and inherent fitness for the idea expressed. Vague conflation of this sort is an easy and tempting method of word creation,<sup>5</sup> and it accounts readily enough for many forms for

\*If I went fust down th' ladder I could click hold on him and chock him over my head, so as he should go squshin' down the shaft, breakin' his bones at every timbefin' . . . Kipling, "On Greenhow Hill," in *Soldiers Three and Military Tales*.

"They've put us into boots," said Una, "Look at my feet—they're all pale white, and my toes are squdged together awfully." Kipling, "Cold Iron," in *Rewards and Fairies*.

<sup>3</sup>A decade or more ago (see Leon Mead, *How Words Grow*, XII, 1902), the London *Academy* offered prizes for four new words. Among those suggested were *snumble*, to signify a child's effort to express the sensation felt in the nostrils when one drinks an effervescing mineral water, *screele*, the sensation produced by hearing a knife-edge squeal on a slate, *scrumgle*, the noise made by a slate pencil squeaked on a slate, *twink*, a testy person full of kinks and cranks, and several similar formations obviously having their origin in a sort of reminiscent amalgamation.

"Echoic composites" might be a better name than "indefinite composites" for the type of blends treated in this paper, were it not for the fact that "echoic"

which the zealous have vainly sought foreign originals or cognates. There might be doubt as regards which words so arose; a fixed list of "indefinite composites" might not be possible; but there can hardly be doubt of the existence of the method itself.

Distinctive of this variety of blends, if they may be called such, is the fact that they so often suggest or involve onomatopoeia, as the words cited have shown; also the fact that they are not felt as specific composites, as are recognized fusion forms; *e.g.*, *promptual*, *fidgited*, *insinuendo*, *sneakret*, the *universanimous* of Lowell's *Biglow Papers*, or Wallace Irwin's *kissletoe-vine* and *nightinglory bird*.<sup>6</sup> There is always the sense of intrinsic fitness for the idea expressed, but not a sense of definite elements in amalgam. However, the line between blends proper and conjectural or indefinite blends is sometimes hard to draw. The now well-established though lately formed *squawk* may be a welding of *squeak* and *squall*, but *squeal*, *shriek*, *hawk*, etc., may have haunted the mind also in its creation. *Scurry*, of doubtful etymology, may be a "portmanteau form" from *scour*, older *skirr*, and *hurry*; but, were it a recent instead of an older word, one would be tempted to think that *scud*, *scoot*, etc., might have played some part in its formation. Into *splurge*, for which no etymology has been proposed, might enter the elements of *splash*, with its variants *splatter*, *splutter*, and *large*. *Flaunt* has been thought to blend the elements of *fly*, *flout*, *vaunt*,<sup>7</sup> etc. The *myowl*, used by Kipling and others, may combine *meow* and *yowl*, but it involves also the suggestive power of *howl*, *wail*, *yell*, etc. Perhaps, if it is expedient to attempt to draw a definite line at all, blend-words proper may be defined as, or restricted to, those having two, or at most three, elements in combination; as the mongrel *quitate* from *graduate* and *quit*, *interturb* from *interrupt* and *disturb*, or *compushity* from *compulsion*, *push*, and *necessity*, or *compushency* from *compulsion*, *push*, and *urgency*, or *boldrumptious* from *presumptuous*, *bold*, and *rumpus*. Those that recall, or seem vaguely to have the potency of four words or more, might then be classed as indefinite blends. In factitious words of

is usually employed by philologists not in its primary meaning—that which it would have here—but in the meaning of onomatopoeic, given it by Dr. Murray, Mr. Bradley and others.

<sup>6</sup> "Letters of a Japanese Schoolboy," in *Collier's Weekly*, vi, viii, xix, Vols. 41, 42.

<sup>7</sup> *New English Dictionary*.

the first type, the elements are often deliberately and consciously chosen. In words of the second type this is by no means to be implied. But much emphasis should not be placed on the number of elements entering into blends. Of more importance surely is the distinction that coinages of the type treated in this paper are created under the influence of indefinite rather than definite suggestion. Many words which are properly to be classed as indefinite composites might depend on no more than two or three words vaguely present in the user's mind.

To some, the words under discussion are "imitative words,"<sup>8</sup> or "imitative variants" of existent established words. In the sense that the onomatopoetic factor enters into many, as already noted, the name is often valid; but it is less good if "imitative" is meant to imply that they are made in direct imitation of other words. The impelling motive in their creation is less conscious imitation than vague recollection, with resultant fusion, of certain elements in other words; elements which have come—largely through association or reminiscence—to have a certain symbolic power.

To attempt a fixed or exhaustive list of indefinite blends would no doubt, as already noted, prove neither very successful, nor perhaps very profitable. The short list which follows—a list which might have been indefinitely extended—is meant to be suggestive only; it supplements the illustrative words already cited. Unless entry otherwise is made, the forms listed are from Wright's *English Dialect Dictionary*, and no etymology, or theory of origin, was given for them there. The list is purposely confined mainly to contemporary dialect words. After all, it is these words which one approaches with fewest predilections, and concerning which, since they are contemporary, our *Sprachgefühl* ought to be most reliable. As has been often pointed out, the processes of living dialect speech are often much more important for the investigation of the problems of linguistics than is investigation of the literary language.

**bash**, strike, beat, smash. "Aa bashed me head," "Ye've bashed yer hat." Barrère and Leland, *Dictionary of Slang*, following the *New English Dictionary*, suggest Scandinavian origin, and com-

<sup>8</sup> See *slump*, originally meaning to fall or sink in a bog or swamp. The *New English Dictionary* calls this work "probably imitative" in origin; but compare the group *slip*, *swamp*, *plump*, *thump*, *bump*, etc., from which it might well have been built. The *Century Dictionary* enters words of the character of *croodle*, *flump*, etc., as perhaps "imitative words."

- pare Swedish *basa*, strike; but note the group *beat*, *bang*, *mash*, *smash*, *crush*, etc.
- blash**, a sudden blaze or flame. "Light sticks only make a blash," "His een blashed fire." "A fire into which paraffin had been thrown was said to blash up." Note *blaze*, *flare*, *flash*, etc.
- bumble**, bungle, blunder, halt, stumble. "He bummed on an' spoiled his work." Note *bungle*, *fumble*, *jumble*, *stumble*, etc.
- cangle**, quarrel, wrangle, haggle, cavil. "We may not stay now to cangle." Called "perhaps onomatopoeic," in the *New English Dictionary*. Noted in the *Century Dictionary* as apparently a voiced frequentative of a verb *cank*, from *camp*, with possible Icelandic cognates. But cf. the group *cavil*, *quarrel*, *wrangle*, *jangle*, *haggle*, etc.
- chelp**, chirp, squeak, yelp, chatter. "Children nowadays will chelp at you and sauce you," "The magpie chelps at ye." Cf. *chirp*, *cheep*, *chatter*, *yelp*.
- chirl**, chirp, warble. "The laverock chirlt his cantie sang." Cf. *chirp*, *cheep*, *trill*, *shrill*, etc.
- chittle**, twitter, warble. "The birds are chittlin' bonnily." Cf. *cheep*, *chirp*, *twitter*, *warble*.
- criggle**, wiggle, creep, crawl, wriggle. "I can feel 'un (the devil) just as if he was a-crigglin' and a-crawlin' in my head." Cf. *creep*, *crawl*, *wiggle*, *wriggle*.
- croodle**, huddle, crouch, curl, cringe, cuddle, fondle. "The lads croodled down," "Come to mother and 'er'll croodle yo." Cf. *crouch*, *cuddle*, *huddle*, *fondle*, etc.
- crunkle**, rumple, crease. "A yellow crunkled scrap." Cf. *crinkle*, *crumple*, *crease*, *wrinkle*, *rumple*, etc.
- flawp**, go about vulgarly and ostentatiously dressed; also a name given an awkward slovenly person. "Flaupen aboot frae mornin' ta neet," "A girt idle flawp." Cf. *flaunt*, *flout*, *flip*, *flop*, *flirt*, *awkward*, etc.
- flaze**, flare up, blaze. "This floor can't flaze, for it's made o' poplar." Cf. *flare*, *flame*, *flash*, *blaze*, etc.
- flerk**, jerk about, flourish, flip or flop. "Don't keep flerking that in my face." Cf. *flourish*, *flip*, *flop*, *jerk*.
- flump**, fall heavily, or headlong; a fall accompanied by a noise. "He went down such a flump," "A hawk flumps or flops as a bird," "He fell down full flump." Cf. *fall* *plump*, *thump*, *bump*, etc.
- friddle**, trifle, potter, waste time. "He was friddlin' on at his work." Cf. *fritter*, *trifle*, *fiddle*, *frivol*, etc.
- glumpish**, glum, gloomy, sullen. "Mary is glumpish to-day." Noted in the *Century Dictionary*. Cf. *glum*, *gloomy*, *lumpish*, *dumps*, etc.
- scrawk**, scratch, scrawl, mark; also squeak, shriek, scream. "Just scrawk yer pen through this," "Wha'tgee scrawk fur?" Cf. *scratch*, *mark*, *scrawl*; *scream*, *squall*, *squawk*, *shriek*, etc.

**skreek**, shriek, scream, creak, make a grating noise. "She skreek'd oot like a cat yawlin'," "It skreeks so it gets my teeth on edge."

Cf. *shriek*, *scream*, *squeak*, *creak*, etc.

**screel**, cry, shriek, squeal, scream. "What wi' screalin' wimmin." Perhaps built from *scream*, *shriek*, *shrill*, *squeal*, etc.

**snaggle**, giggle, snicker. "'It must be a very fine game to have such a large score,' I snaggle." *Letters of a Japanese Schoolboy*, xxxvii, by Wallace Irwin. Cf. *snicker*, *giggle*, *gag*, *haggle*, etc.

**snuddle**, nestle, cuddle. "Snuddled together like birds in a nest." Built from *snuggle*, *cuddle*, *huddle*, etc.

**troddle**, toddle, go. "The young things trodlin'." Note *trudge*, *trip*, *trot*, *toddle*.

That words of this type are the special product of modern times or contemporary conditions is by no means to be assumed. They are likely to be as old in language history as are fusion forms or hybrids, or composites in general. The words in the list cited are aggressively dialectal, it is admitted. Like all indefinite blends they tend to be telling, forceful words, not neutral; also they are predominantly rather ugly or unbeautiful formations. In words of special folk or dialect coinage there seems in general to be little striving for the attractive or agreeable. There is a marked tendency toward the jocular; but still more characteristic is the focusing of interest in the expressive.

It is probable enough that the words in the short illustrative list cited are not especially well selected from the many that suggest themselves. No doubt some among them may be in origin direct amalgams, or contaminations; others may not really be amalgams at all; they may have had a purely onomatopoetic origin, or they may be loan words; or they may be mere accidental or capricious perversions of forms already in existence. But some are surely obscure blendings, or reminiscent amalgams, of the type under discussion.<sup>9</sup>

1912

<sup>9</sup> In the 1930's a thorough study of American blends with full illustrative lists was made by Dr. Harold Wentworth, of the *American Dialect Dictionary*. He has never published it, however. Many new blends launched as trade names, in advertising, in the language of columnists, of radio speakers and others have been noted in the volumes of *American Speech*.

## RESEARCH IN AMERICAN ENGLISH<sup>1</sup>

### I

A discussion of research in American English subdivides itself naturally into a review of beginnings, a survey of contemporary activities, and some consideration of the outlook. Naturally, too, it takes primarily the form of an historical or bibliographical sketch.

Philological activities in the field of American English were not very extensive or thoroughgoing until recent times. Among them, and for a long period, matters of vocabulary and idiom had nearly a monopoly of interest. Pioneer inquiries into the handling of the English language in America came from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The term "Americanism," still in currency, was coined by John Witherspoon (1722-94). Witherspoon was a Scotchman, a lineal descendant, on his mother's side, of John Knox. He came to this country to be the president of the College of New Jersey, later Princeton, in 1768, remaining at Princeton until he died. He was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. A republican in politics, Witherspoon was a conservative in language. In a series of articles (*Essays on Americanisms: Perversions of the English Language in the United States, Cant Phrases, etc.*) reprinted in volume IV of his essays (*The Druid, Phil-*

<sup>1</sup> Read before the College Section of the National Council of English Teachers, Kansas City, 1929.



adelphia, 1801), he had much to say of "American vulgarisms." The next scholar of importance to occupy himself with American English was John Pickering (1777-1846). Pickering was a Harvard graduate, a classical scholar, and a student of Indian languages, who won for himself the name of "the chief founder of American philology." He was the author of *A Memoir of the Present State of the English Language in America, with a Vocabulary Containing Various Words and Phrases Peculiar to the United States*, a work printed in 1816, enlarged from a paper contributed to the Memoirs of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1815. Pickering's glossary of American terms contained 520 words. His work is said to have been received as rather an impertinence by his reviewers. The validity of his list of terms was debated for a long time. It would be of interest to examine his display of Americanisms for inquiry into their present status; but his book is not in many libraries and is not easy to obtain.

With the War of the Revolution came a new and aggressive patriotic spirit, bringing a wish for an independent national language as well as an independent national government. The fervent apostle of this independence was Noah Webster. His *Dissertations on the English Language*, published in 1789 and dedicated to Benjamin Franklin, was an expression of his radicalism. When his great work, *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, was printed in 1828, he expressed in his preface his wish to write as an American a guide for American youth. He introduced many innovations in spelling and pronunciation. Considerably later the title *An American Dictionary* was replaced, for reasons of sales, no doubt, by the more tactful title *An International Dictionary*. English usages were placed alongside the American, while the aggressive patriotic spirit of the original dictionary was modified.

Joseph Worcester (1744-1865), who was Hawthorne's tutor, was no lexicographical patriot like Webster but deferred to British usage. His more conservative dictionary was long a rival of Webster's. Worcester's *Comprehensive and Explanatory Dictionary of the English Language* was published in Boston in 1830. Some copies are still in circulation but it is now no longer reissued and is rarely cited. J. R. Bartlett's dictionary, bearing the subtitle, *A Glossary of Words and Phrases Usually Regarded as Peculiar to the United States*, was published in 1848. It appeared in new editions in 1859, 1860, etc., and was reprinted as late as 1896. It is to be

found in most university libraries and is still much consulted. It attracted interest in Europe as well as in the United States. On the whole, however, this interest was lay rather than academic. The scholarly world still looked upon the study of American English as of slight consequence. In 1872 came *Americanisms, the English of the New World*, by a Swedish author, Maximilian Schele de Vere. This work of 685 pages offered a fresh collection of material and supplied interesting discussion. The book is still good reading, although it has had many critics.

Until nearly the end of the century attention to our vernacular language remained rather in disrepute. The tendencies of the colloquial language seemed regrettable, more worthy of depreciation than of study. Professor W. D. Whitney wrote in his *Language and the Study of Language* (1867):

The low-toned party newspaper is too much the type of the prevailing literary influence by which the style of speech of our rising generation is moulded. A tendency to slang, to colloquial indulgence, and even vulgarities is the besetting sin against which we, as Americans, have especially to guard and to struggle.

It was Professor Whitney, too, who spoke of the "ridiculous infection of *eye-ther* and *nye-ther*" for *either* and *neither*. He might well have felt discouraged had he foreseen the impetus in the use of slang and colloquialisms that was to come in our own century, even for the literary language. Great headway has been made, too, by the pronunciations that he so harshly condemned.

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century the leading writer to concern himself with American English was Richard Grant White (1821-1885), who long counted as *arbiter elegantiarum* in matters of usage. In no sense a researcher, he was a purist and conservative, relying on opinion—his own. His books (*Words and Their Uses*, dedicated to James Russell Lowell, 1870, and *Everyday English*, 1881) and his magazine articles brought him the position of dictator and law giver. For decades he seemed the last word on usage, the favorite "authority" of teachers and professors. His intolerance, confidence in himself, and courage helped to entrench him in his position. Here is an illustration of the way in which he lent interest to a pronouncement. When reprimanding those who referred to "overshoes" as "pairs of rubbers" he remarked that in Philadelphia, with attention to the substance of which they are made, the articles are referred to as "gums." An anecdote fol-

lows of a Philadelphia man and his wife who were going to make a visit at a house in New York. The man entered the parlor alone, and to the question, "Why, where is Emily?" he answered, "O, Emily is outside cleaning her gums upon the mat." "Now," adds White, "the proper term is neither rubbers nor gums but overshoes."

Somewhat more liberal than White was Professor T. R. Lounsbury of Yale (1838-1915), author of many magazine articles early in the twentieth century and of *The Standard of Pronunciation in English*, 1904, and *The Standard of Usage in English*, 1908. As a philologist he had considerable tolerance for the colloquial idiom and for vernacular usages in general.

Gilbert M. Tucker's *Our Common Speech* first appeared in the Transactions of the Albany Institute, 1882. His *American English*, growing out of his early work, was printed in 1921, as summarizing "forty years of observation." John S. Farmer's *Americanisms Old and New: a Dictionary of Words, Phrases, and Colloquialisms Peculiar to the United States*, was printed in London in 1889. Another London work was Charles L. Norton's *Political Americanisms*, a glossary of terms and phrases current at different periods in American politics, a book of 135 pages, appearing in 1890. Clapin Sylva's *A New Dictionary of Americanisms*, "being a glossary of words supposed to be peculiar to the United States and Canada," issued in 1902, brings our survey into the present period.

A new era, when academic interest in the vernacular begins to manifest itself, is ushered in by the formation of the American Dialect Society in 1889. The society was called together by such men as E. S. Sheldon, C. H. Grandgent, L. B. R. Briggs, and G. L. Kittredge, all of Harvard, and by W. W. Newell, the president of the newly founded American Folk-Lore Society. Professor F. J. Child of Harvard, the distinguished ballad scholar, was the first president of the Society, E. S. Sheldon the secretary, and C. S. Grandgent the treasurer. The first volume of *Dialect Notes* was printed in 1896. The Dialect Society still has vigorous existence, with W. A. Neilson of Smith College as president, and P. W. Long of the Merriam Company as secretary, but its periodical, originally a quarterly, has been reduced to one number yearly. This was the result, however, of the mounting cost of printing, rather than of a lack of material. It has included articles and studies on a variety

of topics but prevailingly it has devoted itself to the recording of vocabularies.

Richard H. Thornton's *An American Glossary*, "being an attempt to illustrate certain Americanisms upon historical principles, 1912, in two volumes, is the next landmark deserving mention. Under the influence of the *New English Dictionary upon Historical Principles* it bettered the methods of the older glossaries of Americanisms. It proved to be an immensely useful book and it is still widely consulted. A great mass of unpublished material brought together by Thornton was for a long time in the Harvard library awaiting the opportunity to be made available for the general reader. It is now, I think, in the hands of those working at American lexicography at the University of Chicago. With Thornton's dictionary we may close the period of beginnings, reiterating the generalizations that, on the whole, nineteenth-century activity came from laymen, not from institutions of learning, and that the main emphasis went to the examination of vocabulary and idiom.

## II

The era of World War I, with its shifts of emphasis and its ferment of new ideas, brought changes in many fields. Interest was deepened in the institutions and traditions of the New World—in the United States as differentiated from England. The study of American history and of American literature was immensely stimulated both in this country and abroad. There arose also a wider and deeper interest in our national variety of speech. It became of importance to determine the New World tendencies in the handling of the English language. Especially, stimulus was given by the publication in 1919 of H. L. Mencken's *The American Language*, an independent and original treatment of the subject, the most comprehensive and arresting yet made. It was the fruit of many years of work on the part of an author who was not a professional scholar but a journalist, editor, and satirist. He thought that the academic world should turn its attention to the unexplored linguistic fields immediately about it. He was irked that our common speech had never had the attention that the dialects of France and Germany and England had had in their respective countries. He stood for freedom and reinvigoration, and he gloried, if anything, in our national divergences. To him the recognition of such divergences was

not treason to the mother tongue, an unsocial act, but something that deserved the attention of the trained philologist.

Mencken's work contained the fullest bibliography of the subject of American English that had yet been made. Somewhat later (1927) appeared the exhaustive entries in Professor A. G. Kennedy's *A Bibliography of Writings on the English Language*, which records everything of importance bearing on American English written before the end of the year 1922. The works of Mencken and Kennedy give the student all the help he needs up till the dates of their publication. Dr. Kennedy has continued his bibliography in the columns of the periodical *American Speech*, recording there books and articles of interest from 1922 until the present.

Fresh and painstaking studies of American pronunciation have been made by Professor G. P. Krapp, (*The Pronunciation of Standard English in America*) in 1919, and J. S. Kenyon (*American Pronunciation*) whose work was printed in 1924. Perhaps the first research work in American English of real magnitude was Dr. Krapp's *The English Language in the United States*, published in two volumes for the Modern Language Association in 1925.

The present period is marked by several momentous undertakings. Of great importance is the special project fostered by the University of Chicago, the making of an historical dictionary of American English. Sir William Craigie, one of the makers of the Oxford Dictionary, was imported to set it in motion, and to supervise it. The machinery of collecting, recording, and interpreting the phenomena of American English was supplied by him, following the plan worked out for the historical English dictionary. Alongside this undertaking, and also under the supervision of Sir William Craigie, there is promised later an *American Dialect Dictionary*, the goal for so many years of the American Dialect Society. These two dictionaries will constitute, when finished, the most important contribution to the study of American English made since the appearance of the patriotic pioneer dictionary of Noah Webster.

In 1925 appeared the first issue of *American Speech*, a *Journal of Linguistic Usage*. It is a bi-monthly periodical devoted to the special study of American English. It announces itself as interested in material dealing with current usages, speech in the schools, phenomena of vocabulary, pronunciation, lore of place-names, studies in style, in local dialects, slang, special nomenclatures, and non-English dialects in the United States. It has published matter in many

fields, has examined unexplored corners, and its contents are analyzed regularly in many foreign periodicals, English, French, Dutch, and German. It is the opinion of its editors that no ambitious teacher or student of the English language should be without it.

To the present time belongs yet another notable project, the making, under the auspices of the Linguistic Society of America, of a Linguistic Atlas of American English, to be financed by the Council of Learned Societies. It is to investigate and record dialect phenomena in something the manner of the *Sprachatlas des Deutschen Reiches* and *L'Atlas Linguistique de la France*. Main praise for the initiation and pushing of the project belongs to Professor Hans Kurath of the University of Ohio. Besides affording a general guide to dialect boundaries, the atlas will, it is hoped, involve special study of interesting local centers, and ultimately, perhaps, of foreign speeches in the United States.

### III

With the foregoing projects under way or in prospect, the present period should go down in the history of American philology as of unusual activity and importance. There is much and diversified material to work upon, and there are many lines to interest the worker. They concern grammar and pronunciation as well as vocabulary and idiom, and involve such matters as regional variants, the persistence of forms obsolete in the parent speeches, English or foreign, and variants showing the influence of the speeches of the Old World. There are class dialects or the jargons of special groups to be scrutinized, such as the vocabularies of hoboes, crooks, vagabonds, drug addicts, the vocabularies of oil well workers, or miners, loggers, sailors, vaudevillians, actors, circus employees, or the growing vocabularies of the films and the "talkies." To ascend in the scale, there are the ever increasing jargons of the academic and professional groups, such as educators, psychologists, scientists, physicians, etc., to be kept track of or analyzed. Many studies of a general nature await their makers, studies that call for fresh investigations or a synthesizing of the results of others. Not only should American English, as over against British English, continue to receive attention, in all its phases, but there are many foreign languages spoken in this country that are of importance intrinsically and in relation to American English. Limitless fields seem to open up in the history of individual words and expressions, in noting

localisms of vocabulary and pronominal and verbal peculiarities and miscellaneous phenomena, such as colorful exclamations and interjections, varied indefinite terms used to avoid seeking out the proper word, popular terms of disparagement and encomium, ablaut or rhyming compounds, saws, proverbs, striking similes or metaphors. The popular names of birds, insects, and plants vary for different regions, and they blend the interest of linguistics and folklore.

The clinical material may be difficult to bring together but it is no more difficult for the linguistic scholar than for the student of American history or literature, or American folklore. And it is abundant. Nearly all books, pamphlets, letters, documents, periodicals, broadsheets, have interest as exhibiting American language variations; for all are likely to contain special usages, colloquialisms, or coinages. The oral field is always rich for the gleaner. It is usually that latest to be sought out, because of the comparative fewness of trained workers, and because it seems more difficult of access than material existing in print. But though it had little scholarly attention in the nineteenth century, spoken American English will have much attention in coming decades. The doctoral dissertation in the field of American literature came somewhat belatedly, but it is now here. At its heels may come that in the field of American English, written or oral. For neither type of dissertation were conditions favorable until our new spirit of national pride and self-confidence emerged out of World-War conditions.

1928

## *ON VOCABULARY AND DICTION*

### AMERICAN ENGLISH TODAY

Before the sixteenth century, that era of adventurous voyaging and world discovery, the English tongue had little interest for those dwelling outside of England. It was spoken in a foggy little island northwest of the European mainland, and the language of King Alfred, Chaucer, and Malory seemed of little importance to others. In the sixteenth century, the century of the Tudor monarchs and of Spenser and Shakespeare, began the colonizings that were to take English all over the world and to start up new centers of English civilization. One of these, founded along the Atlantic coast, was to develop into the United States of America. The speech of the daughter nation, too, was to have little interest for outsiders for a long period, unless to serve as an object of transatlantic disparagement. In the main, throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries everything distinctively American in language was thought bad and modifications of British usage held to be corruptions. The mother tongue was authentic English and our new world brand raw and impure, and the wise person would defer. Walt Whitman preached independence of Old-World usage in language as well as in political ideas, and he sought to put some of his theories into practice. There were pioneer scholars, too, who fostered interest in American English in the nineties and later decades. Yet little



more than a start was made. Even into the early twentieth century it was emphasized by arbiters of style that it was English procedures that should prevail.

The World War with its shifts of emphasis and ferment of new ideas may be taken as the time of break between the old and the new attitudes. The tide of events following 1914, changing the calm and optimistic pre-War world into a time of intense strain and excitement, turned attention to things American all over the world. The experiences of these years heightened interest in American institutions, traditions, and history. There arose new interest in American literature. The popularity of this subject at educational institutions increased amazingly. There sprang up also interest in our national variety of the English speech, its beginnings, its relation to the mother tongue, its expansions of vocabulary, the New-World tendencies of the language. We look back, as on a pageant, on the era closing with our entry into the World War, and we look back on it with something like scientific detachment. It has new and strong attraction for us. Out of the post-War conditions a spirit of national pride and confidence emerged. We became self-conscious about our speech. Instead of apologizing for our departures from British standards, we realized all at once that Americanisms, long looked at askance, have tremendously enriched the language. Under new conditions of environment many new words were needed. These not only established themselves in usage in this country but many ultimately made their way abroad, where their origin and their former ill repute have now been forgotten. Today instead of disparaging New-World neologisms we take pride in them.

The law of life is change and growth. There is nothing surprising in this sudden alteration of status of American English, just as there is nothing surprising in the fact that language itself undergoes mutations, usually in the direction of condensed and simplified expression. Marked linguistic changes, or shifts of attitude toward change, seem to come in waves and after a time of national upheaval. Fortunately for Shakespeare and his contemporaries there was great freedom in his day in the handling of words and in the bringing of new words into the language. It was a period of exuberant and untrammelled expression. In contrast, at the end of the seventeenth and during the eighteenth century, attempts to guide and guard the mother tongue were conspicuous. Now, after the

World War, we are again in a period of freedom and change, with condensation and simplification and informality *desiderata*. The conventionalizing influence of schools, of teaching, of grammars and dictionaries is stronger than ever before, and the departures that appear may not seem very radical. They testify, however, to our reaction from authority and desire to shake off trammels. We refuse to support pedants who try to fix the language, to freeze it into something unalterable. Novelties take our fancy. In any case, whether the phenomena observable in our contemporary speech are unimportant and transient, or are the contrary, it is of interest to note what some of them are.

What, for one thing, is happening to contemporary prose style? Changes of idiom are bound to recur as one period passes into another, and to write in the manner of a bygone period is not an asset. It is not so long ago, however, that models from the nineteenth century, or even from the eighteenth, were placed before college students wishing to improve their power of writing or to achieve "elegance" through the study of "rhetoric." Little imitation of the kind is fostered in the classrooms of today. And in the writing world itself our period is characterized, I think, more by the shunning of conventional models than by devotion to them. There are changes in the social level of the speech taken as standard. Formal or academic writers may still strive for literary language and naturally enough, for they must be linguistically conservative. But on the whole those who seek with old-time zeal for culture and correctness of expression are likely to be thought old-fashioned. Americans seem to fear seeming superior more than do Britons. Certainly the distinction between educated and vulgar language is here less sharp. I recall reading in a nineteenth-century novel of a group of Bostonians, a banker or two, a clergyman, an editor, some business men, who listened with amused tolerance to the accent and the grammatical lapses of a newly-rich Westerner. To the hearers they were an index of his social status. Contrast in our own period James Truslow Adam's picture of educated men affecting the language of the uneducated, ashamed to be too correct. Often it is hard to tell by his speech a garage man from a professor. There is more democracy of language in this country than in England, partly because there is less class demarcation and partly because there is less isolation and therefore less dialect. Our country is younger, and teachers, writers, workers move from region to

region. The austere ideal in language is replaced more and more widely by the language of every day.

American writers, British writers too, now profess to strive for complete condensation and honesty in written utterance. Expression becomes plainer, more forceful, more staccato. There is preference for the vigorous and serviceable, for a run of sentences easy to follow. Style has been influenced by the spirit of the age. The balance sought by Johnson, Gibbon, De Quincey is rarely sought for now. The patterning out of passages like fitting beautiful pieces into mosaic work, the poetic ideal of Tennyson and in prose of R. L. Stevenson, is if anything decried. Contemporary prose is of less formal structure and less decorated with metaphors and allusions than that of half a century ago. It would be of interest to compare the dialogue of the middle-class characters of Thackeray and of Sinclair Lewis. The writing of present-day essayists often seems to approximate the forms and rhythms of talk. Are we to ascribe the change to the pitch of contemporary life? Are its rapid tempo, excitement, and jarring raucous noises reflected in our present-day writing? The old repose is as out of date as strolling and musing. It has given way to the staccato and emphatic; it is nervous, not relaxed. Slower movement and intricate expression have been speeded up into prose that jerks, into faster rhythms that fit the pace of modern life. In poetry too the assault on the reader is often violent.

America's leading experimenter in expression is Gertrude Stein. It is she who defined writing as "the choosing of words to go next to each other," and defined poetry as "the caressing, the completely caressing and addressing of nouns." She has striven desperately for originality, trying subterranean experiment, to get outside the conventional, in an endeavor to convey what she feels. Her method seems to be to present a thought, twist it, turn it, revert to it. She gets a hypnotic effect by repetitions and by refrain-like arrangements of words in sentences. Her effects are gained through sound, at the expense of logic and coherence and of intelligibility. If her writings show the workings of her mind, if she thinks as she writes, hers is a strange mind and strange thinking. Yet she has had an influence on fiction writing, more perhaps on selected passages by individual authors than on any book as a whole.

Americans usually assume that the cult of experiment and change is characteristic of this country rather than of England, for the

mother country is more impeded by tradition. We are supposed to lead in the search for the fresh and unusual. Yet the conspicuous experimenter in prose of our era is not Gertrude Stein, is not an American, but an Irishman, James Joyce, a distinctive figure in fiction writing. He is very conscious of language and the handling of it, and he has done novel things with it. In his *Ulysses*, which dismayed the fiction-reading world for a time, he relied on making words carry symbolic meanings. He went far in seeking to suggest the association of ideas by references and allusions, in amalgam, as it were. In his later book, *Work in Progress*, of 1934, he tried to explore the subterranean in human beings, to get below the level of consciousness and give experiences as they come in dreaming. The language of his latest book, *Finnegans Wake*, 1939, is so extraordinary that one wonders whether anybody save the author and the proofreader has ever read it *in toto*. Joyce's books are bizarre, and they will never be popular; but they have significance in breaking old trammels. A second innovator across the Atlantic is a man of another type, a Briton, C. K. Ogden, who in his *Basic English* of 1920 onward, pioneered in reducing the language to its lowest terms, simplifying it in vocabulary, spelling, and idiom. He outlined upwards of a thousand words by means of which, he maintained, almost anything could be expressed. His object was to make English more internationally acceptable and usable.

A complaint sometimes heard about present-day prose is that the sentence is disintegrating. In the desire for terseness and for realism there are abrupt stoppages in the expression of thought, or the thought is left unfinished. There are grammatical intercalations, and omissions of intermediate steps. All this may help to save space, and without cost of intelligibility, but it comes at the expense of beauty and completeness. The influence of the newspaper account, especially of its telegraphic headlines directed at the hurried reader, is stronger than love of the old fastidiousness and symmetry. Alongside other simplifications, punctuation too, we are told, is being oversimplified.

Professor W. D. Whitney of Yale wrote in his *Language and the Study of Language* of 1867:

The low-toned party newspaper is too much the type of the prevailing literary influence by which the style of speech of our rising generation is moulded. A tendency to slang, to colloquial indulgence, and even vulgarities

is the besetting sin against which we, as Americans, have especially to guard and to struggle.

Could he have looked ahead, Professor Whitney might well have called for restoratives. The influence of the headline style of newspaper expression in our time is hardly to be overlooked. Its preference for monosyllables has brought into prominence, and made stock, many short words formerly rather rare. For instance, children are "tots," the world is the "orb," "aces" are common in other lines than cards or dice. To anger is to "ire." Headlines have to be thought out rapidly, fitted to one column, and made to extend from one to four lines. The number of letters in a word is governed by the size of the type. No word may be divided at the end of a line and no word may be repeated. Every headline should have a verb expressed or implied, though none may begin with a verb. Therefore short forceful words must be depended upon. As a result of this quest for short cuts a standardized vocabulary has developed. "Zep Due to Sail on Tour of Orb," "Tell Tale Oil on Sea Spikes Hope for Lost Clipper," "Stenog Asks Heart Balm" are quite typical. "Crash" or "smash" replaces accident. "Love nests" and "triangles" recur. One reads of "shows," "photos," "mikes," "autos," "hit runners," "hikes," "air aces," "jazz," "crooks," "thugs," "rows," "death tolls." The result might be called jitterbug writing. The simplicity is that of Basic English, and an effect on the popular vocabulary is inevitable.

Other phenomena of vocabulary concern word-forms themselves. The delight of the Elizabethans in playing with words has reappeared but without the Elizabethan greatness of expression. We miss the sixteenth-century sense of beauty. Our devotion is not to the beautiful but to the arresting, to colloquialisms, to slang, to doing strange things to words. A few generations ago dignity was fostered in speech written or oral and novelty and informality were not. The same difference from the ceremoniousness of the Victorians that now prevails in garb prevails in language also. The ideal of our professional humorists of the radio and the films is to evolve something striking. The phrase-makers of our popular idiom vie with one another in their search for the picturesque. Audacities thrive; verbal license is unbridled. This is well illustrated by the language of periodicals like *Variety*, in which a child role is a "juve part," a burlesque that is filmed a "picture-burley," good dancing technique "hotcha hoofology," or that of *Time* with its

"cinemaudiences," "ballyhooligans," "intelligentsiacs," and by the vast journalistic literature telling of sound films. After O. Henry and his successors, unconventionalities became a cult, not, however, unconventionalities of the spelling or dialect type relied on in the decades of Josh Billings and Artemus Ward. In their day it was rusticity that had humorous appeal. Newspaper columnists and writers for the stage and the films try, in our time, for linguistic stunts. Literary selectiveness in speech is left to the clergyman, the professor, and the old-fashioned.

It is a commonplace to remark how expressions once carefully avoided are now sought for. Witness the recurrence of what were long thought vulgarisms. Words once barred in polite conversation are pushed into the foreground. Slang, characterized in the first half of last century as "low" and "disgusting" language, now thrives despite the disapproval of purists and of the classroom. Editorial columns now avail themselves of it; editors who used to substitute formalities for informalities now make the substitution in reverse. The vogue of slang has succeeded that of dialect in fiction and on the stage. In the eighteenth century British slang was pretty literary. The colloquial language mirrored in its fiction revels in locutions like, "a prodigiously handsome man," "I liked the new-comer monstrously," "Hats are now vastly left off." Colloquial or slang speech has now dropped to a lower if terser level. There is contrast too in the types of loan-words borrowed. Most of the foreign importations of eighteenth-century England came from France. Letters of the time show a liberal sprinkling of words like *badinage*, *nonchalance*, *ennui*, *naïveté*. Italian was represented in less degree, mainly by words belonging to musical nomenclature, such as *sonata*, *tenor*, *soprano*. The influx of imported words into the England of our time is American rather than French or Italian. Contrasting with older borrowings from our shores, such as *wigwam*, *wampum*, *pipe of peace*, which now have little vitality, collocations such as *big shot*, *on the spot*, *take for a ride*, from the jargon of American gangsters and American films, have made their way into common parlance overseas.

Contemporary linguists take more interest in everyday speech, in colloquial, regional, and dialect usage than was true formerly; and there are many phenomena to watch. Assuredly our present-day coinages, curtailments, and distortions would have perturbed our ancestors greatly. About 1913 I examined the language of ad-

vertising, and in the next year, 1914, I made a study of blends or amalgam words. Looking back from the 1930's to register change and development, the expansion one finds in both fields is striking. The language of advertising in the eighteenth century seems now strangely dignified and formal. Here are some examples coming from the *Spectator* of Addison and Steele:

The famous Spanish Blacking for Gentlemen's Shoes. Famous Drops for Hypochondriack Melancholy. An Admirable Confect which assuredly cures Stuttering or Stammering in Children or Grown Persons. The most noble Composition in the World, removing all manner of disorders of the Head and Brain. Consumptions of all sorts radically cured by a famous Elixir. The Royal Chymical Wash-Ball for the Hands and Face. Celebrated Vapour Tincture, so deservedly famous for curing Convulsions, Apoplexies, Head-Pains, Vapours, and all Nervous Distempers.

If these designations seem strange to us, they probably seem no stranger than will, in a hundred years or more, Ye Olde Tailleur Shoppe, Ye Moderne Shoe Repair Shoppe, Ye Hot Dogge Shoppe, and Nu Bon Ton Beauté Shoppé (*sic*), if they are preserved for posterity that long.

When I examined blends in 1914, they seemed a linguistic phenomenon of fair importance, transient perhaps and sporadic, but deserving the attention of philologists. The special impetus of those days to their creation was the "portmanteau words" of Lewis Carroll, some of which, like *chortle* from chuckle and snort, or *galumphing* from galloping and triumphing, or *mimsy* from miserable and flimsy, have stayed in currency. In 1933 Dr. Harold Wentworth made for his doctoral dissertation a new and exhaustive study of blends that deserves publication. Its displays show that there are now thousands where there used to be hundreds. They have become a stock source in the coining of trade-names. Blending, conscious or unconscious, is an old language process, like punning, which is often a type of blending; but never before was it in such conscious vogue. *Smog* for smoke and fog is now an official term of the weather bureau at Washington. The English college term *brunch* for food between breakfast and lunch has increasing currency in this country. Robert Benchley's "mirthquake," *After 1903—What?* was advertised in the *New York Times* as *colossalappendous*, *stupifificent*, *magnossal*. Eddie Cantor's "Ali Baba Comes to Town" is termed a *Cantornado* of laughs. Spirited formations like *fidgetated*, *hellophone*, *gasphyxiated*, *indelicatessen*, *sweatspiration*, *bab-*

*sousing* may be counted upon to bring laughs. "Should the spectacles of a professor be called pedagoggles?" asked a student. Witness further the vigorous audacities and the letter and syllable combinations of the nomenclature of trade. In 1914 *Takhoma Biscuit*, *Nabisco Wafers*, launched by the National Biscuit Company, and *Pebeco Tooth Paste* introduced by the P. Beiersdorf Company, seemed remarkable innovations. Now there are too many such coinages to enumerate: *Conoco*, *Texaco*, *Quink*, *Popsicle*, *Coolerator*, *Keep-U-Neat*. The tendency to amalgamate runs riot in given names also. There is said to be a law standardizing these in Germany. Nothing of the kind in this country interrupts the flow of forms like *Olouise*, *Leilabeth*, *Romiette*, *Olabelle*, *Bethene*. There has been to some extent expansion of this device of conflation in geographical names, also. *Ohiowa*, *Calexico*, *Texarkana* have been succeeded by *Uvada*, *Wyuta*, on the borders of Utah, Nevada, Wyoming. A hotel at Boulder, Colorado, calls itself the *Boulderado*, one at Fort Morgan the *Wyocolo*. Alongside blends alliterations in *k* have retained their popularity surprisingly: *Klassy Kollege Kut Klothes*, *Kiddie Kars*, *Koed Korners*.

In the use of affixes there is no less freedom, for they are attached and interchanged at caprice. New formations appear unchecked. After the advent of *suffragette*, journealese gave the world *slackerette*, *huskerette*, *hoboette*. For a while the suffix of feminine names such as Christine, Josephine when utilized in *doctorine*, *actorine*, *bathcrine* aroused amusement, but only *chorine* has lingered. Agent-suffixes, especially, vary and shift. The dignified ending of physician, electrician, extended itself to *mortician*, then to *beautician* and *cosmetician*, and among humorists to *blackiticians* of shoes and to *spaticians*. New York City had for a time a *spaghetician*. May not some day plumbers become *aquaticians*? *Tippees*, *honorees*, *rushees* hold their own. The last, a name for a girl being rushed for a college fraternity, well suggests the compacting, simplifying impulse that prompts such creations. There are *chalkologist*, *swimmists*, *knittists*. *Time* refers to *tennists*. The *educationist* and *educationalist* replace the educator. The suffix of *laborite*, itself once a novelty, has been extended to *socialite* and *legalite*. *Super*, which gained *élan* from Shaw's superman of *Man and Superman*, a formation in the wake of Nietzsche's *Uebermensch*, keeps its vogue well; one hears of *superbooks*, and *superslams* at bridge, as well as of *supercars* and *superbeauticians*. We have come to know *againsters*,



*ferninsters*, *swingsters*. Among abstract suffixes *-dom* extends itself to *fashiondom*, *bookdom*, and their ilk. *Sportatoriums*, *Shoetoriums*, *Pantatoriums*, *Suitatoriums* decorate the landscape; *Lubritorium* is perhaps more current than any of these. The irradiation of the suffix of *cafeteria*, once the latter word had established itself and its pronunciation, into innumerable *groceries*, *valetérias*, *motorterias*, *doughnuterías* has often been commented upon.

In some instances the vogue of an affix has come in the wake of a war. After the Cuban war *-o* was liked for a time, as in *Excello* shirts, *Indestructo* trunks, and *El Tosto* and *El Perco*, electric devices for toasting and percolating. It still flourishes, although *-co* from company (*Delco*, *Texaco*) is now more popular. After the Russo-Japanese war *-ski*, as in the once current *allrightskey*, *et al.*, had its day, but it remains only in the useful *buttinski*. After the World War, the German *-fest* of *songfest*, *sobfest*, *swatfest*, *pepfest* came to the forefront, and it has proved the most lasting and prolific of the imported suffixes.

A few further chroniclings may be included in this brief survey of vogues among journalists, humorists, and coiners of trade-words. Shortenings for brevity retain their popularity, witness *phone*, which now replaces telephone, much as *bus* has replaced omnibus, the latter once a slang word. Conflated forms like *k'mere*, *nemmind*, manipulations like *oxcuse*, misspellings such as *drawma*, *rawther*, *lawf*, *leetle*, *cheeild*, *yeyus*, *bee-youtiful* are frequent in print. Frequent too are deliberate mispronunciations such as *massacre* and *picturesque* given final accent. Efforts like 'A morceau by Skubbert, a sonata by Beethoven, a nocturne by Choppin, and a fudge by Batch" bring laughter (lawfter) without fail. About the only noticeable legacy of the simplified spelling movement which reached its peak in the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt is in trade-names such as *Holsum Bred*, *Rite-Way Products*, *Hol-Hi* golf balls, *Kleer-Site* golf irons, *Kreep-A-Wa* slippers.

Those who seek to combat the indifference of society in general to the whimsicalities of advertising and journalism have a hard road to travel. The Better-Speech Weeks once fostered by schools have faded out long since, discouraged. Perhaps I paint too heightened a picture. The pendulum always swings ultimately, and phenomena of the present will pass. Reaction may be already on the way. But it is obvious that radio neologisms and movie wisecracks and journalistic manipulations run riot. The influence of the new

mechanical devices, an influence sometimes for the better, sometimes for the worse, may hardly be overlooked. Usage is the best test of good speech, and we think of it not as the usage of the majority but of selected speakers. Language grows from the bottom, from the coinages and usages of talk, as well as from the innovations of scientists and the lettered classes; but if the majority of speakers really determined the best usage at one time (though they may do so in the long run), any form of expression used by and intelligible to the mass of persons would be standard and teachers and secondary schools would be unnecessary.

It is time to revert from contemporary phenomena of the literary and subliterary language to the present status of American English. In his *The Queen's English; Stray Notes on Speaking and Spelling*, issued in 1864, the Reverend Henry Alford, Dean of Canterbury, wrote as follows of the kind of language used in the United States:

Look, to take one familiar example, at the process of deterioration which our Queen's English has undergone at the hands of the Americans. Look at those phrases which so amuse us in their speech and books; at their reckless exaggeration, and contempt for congruity; and then compare the character and history of the nation—its blunted sense of moral obligation and duty to man; its open disregard of conventional right where aggrandisement is to be obtained; and, I may now say, its reckless and fruitless maintenance of the most cruel and unprincipled war in the history of the world. Such examples as this (and they are as many as the number of the nations and their tongues) may serve to show that language is no trifle.

Dean Alford could not foresee the later fear of Englishmen and Americans that the two varieties of English, the Old World and the New, might diverge more and more as time passes, until perhaps the point of intelligibility might be reached. Or if he had, he might have welcomed it!

The English Conference held in London in 1927 discussed the feasibility of taking measures to keep together the diverging brands of English. The spirit of the conference was not oversanguine, but it was hoped by its promoters at least to keep to the fore the international importance of the matter. The Conference was of American financing, and it was partly of American, partly of British stimulus. Some Britons did not welcome it. Witness the following passage, quoted from the *New Statesman* of June 25, 1927, and signed with the initials W. W. Apparently the author felt much like Dean Alford of more than half a century before.

We must hope that the forthcoming dicta [that of an International Committee] of this precious fifty-fifty Council will be received with precisely the respect they are likely to deserve—which is to say none at all. Taking the scheme as a whole, it is hard to say how its sheer fatuity could be surpassed. It is extremely desirable, to say the least, that every necessary effort should be made to preserve some standard of pure idiomatic English. But from what quarter is the preservation of such a standard in any way threatened? The answer is "Solely from America." Yet we are asked to collaborate with Americans on the problem; we are to make bargains about our own tongue; there is to be a system of give and take. Is it conceivable that any really living literary language could ever be "developed" on such lines? Why should we offer to discuss the subject at all with America? We do not want to interfere with their language; why should they seek to interfere with ours? That their huge hybrid population of which only a small minority are even racially Anglo-Saxon should use English as their chief means of intercommunication is our misfortune, not our fault. They certainly threaten our language, but the only way in which we can effectively meet that threat is by assuming—in the words of the authors of *The King's English*—that "Americanisms are foreign words and should be so treated." In any compromise between the *King's English* and the *President's English* there can be no imaginable advantage. . . . So bad cess to this new "Council" and all its works.

A fear of parental contamination through the introduction of Americanisms has often been expressed. Few or none in this country express a fear of our becoming Londonized, unless in pronunciation. There has been some effort, in schools along the Atlantic coast, to Anglicize our pronunciation, to which patriots here and there have felt mildly resistant. In England, protests concerning our speech ways, though fewer perhaps than in the past, are still to be heard. A prominent clergyman affirmed in the *London Times*, "English needs to be preserved from the pollution caused by Americanization and journalism." The conviction has been expressed that "Americans are fouling the well-spring of pure English." The Duke of Windsor, when Prince of Wales, was reprimanded by the English press because in a speech or two he used a few Americanisms—therefore barbarisms. Some Britons, on the other hand, like Virginia Woolf in a passage often quoted, have rather welcomed importations from us:

When we want to freshen our speech we borrow from America—poppycock, rambunctious, booster, good mixer (ugly vigorous slang which creeps into use among us, first in talk, later in writing) come from across the water.

Of course England sends words to America too, though perhaps fewer than she imports. English slang comes quickly to this country *via* fiction and the stage. The humorist, P. G. Wodehouse, who is

well versed in the slang of both countries, has probably done more than any other person to promote an interchange. But no one in the United States seems disturbed by the borrowings. We adopt *gadget*, *cheerio*, *my word*, *swank*, *goofy* and think nothing of it. And of course the staple fundamental language is hardly affected by transient popular colloquialisms anyway. Where the ideas to be expressed are trivial or facetious, the two vernaculars vary widely. Thus the slang of England and that of the United States are far from identical. When the subject matter is purely practical or commonplace, there is also much divergence. Travelers in London and shoppers generally really need glossaries of terms. But when the subject matter is of highest quality, is concerned with abstract values or fundamental concepts, the divergence is so slight as to be almost negligible.

There have been no more linguistic conferences since that in London in 1927. The prevention of divergence appeared to those in attendance difficult if not impossible, however unwelcome divergence might be, and this for several reasons. Retarding by fiat seemed out of the question. How could there be lawgivers? If any body of scholars or literary men claimed authority, such a claim would ruin its chances of making headway. Imagine a one-hundred-per-cent patriot, a member of the American Legion, coerced in the use of his mother tongue by the example of a Briton. Or a Briton coerced into American usage. Each of the many English-speaking peoples has a strong sense of its individual destiny and importance. Each would be unwilling to surrender to the others. Let an organized body claiming legislative authority taboo certain expressions and every self-respecting man of independent mind would hasten to use them. The best that could be done would be to cultivate a sentiment of responsibility, a wish to hold together, to preserve. An attempt to have a fixed international form of cultivated usage, a "standard dialect" of English, one and one only right way of speaking, would have little chance of success.

Today times have changed, however, and we are now somewhat less fearful of divergence. In the last decade the English of England and the English of the United States have actually come closer together. Practical matters can help where the scholarly world cannot. Linkage through the telephone, the radio, and sound films has made a difference. There must be compromise if the largest number of people are to be reached by the new mechanical de-

vices. Contrast the attitude of the *New Statesman* in 1927 with that of Lloyd James, linguistic adviser to the British Broadcasting Corporation, who, if newspaper reports may be relied on, recommended early in 1938 that the Corporation radio talkers copy the diction of President Franklin Roosevelt. Such recognition of a transatlantic model would have been out of the question in the old days. The English themselves now sometimes take a turn at aspersing the brand favored by Professor Henry Cecil Wyld of Oxford, or a yet more ultra-Oxford brand, a variety of English that the late laureate Robert Bridges, though himself a dweller at Oxford, did not sympathize with and wished to modify. Listen to the Briton W. H. Seaman, an extremist, writing on "The Awful English of England" in the *American Mercury* for September, 1933:

I speak for millions of Englishmen when I say that we are as sick and tired of this so-called English accent as you Americans are. It has far less right to be called Standard English than Yorkshire or any other county dialect has—or than any American dialect. It is as alien to us as it is to you. . . . I wrote in 1929: If half the members of each talkie audience shudder every time a silver ghost on the screen says, "Get a load of this" or "It's in the bag," the other half make a note of the wisecrack for future use. I can offer no hope to the professors who think that talkies in pure English prose and verse would stem the Yankee tide; for every such professor there are a thousand talkie fans to whom American has become as intelligible as Cockney, and much more pleasing. There has never been a talkie in pure English prose and verse, and there never will be. . . . We English people have always borrowed other people's languages and made them our own. Let America invent another and we shall absorb that. The language of the future will be Anglo-American or a Yankee-English, intelligible on both sides of the Atlantic and in Shanghai. It will be known as Plain English. . . . It seems indeed that the mass of British people actually find the most God-awful Yankee twang more tolerable than the simpering falsetti of some of our juveniles and ingenués, and the drawl of Will Rogers less foreign to their ears than the hothouse Cockney of Chelsea, Mayfair, and Bloomsbury.

Whether one like it or not, one cannot now minimize the influence of Hollywood. Films are made there, and California pronunciation, which neither diphthongizes o's, uses the "broad a," or drops final r, looms larger now than the pronunciation of Boston, once so admired. American pronunciation in general, like that of Ireland, Scotland, and Northern England, is less radical than that of Southern England, and it is actually more intelligible to hearers than the so-called Public School or Received English favored by Professor Wyld. Some, in a wish to disparage it, call the English of America "old-fashioned"; others prefer to think of it as more

historic, for it preserves older vowel sounds and middle syllables and is in some respects closer to the speech of Shakespeare, the King James Bible, and Milton than is London English. Hollywood diction, such as it is, seems to have increased the prestige of our national vernacular throughout the world.

English has everywhere outdistanced as the language most useful to travelers its former European rival French. If it continues to gain in world standing, which brand of it is likelier to prevail, British or American? Naturally one hopes for a compromise. The two vernaculars have, as already said, come somewhat closer together than they were two decades ago. One hopes for the continuance of mutual intelligibility as long as possible. It is pleasing to think, in any case, that as time passes greater tolerance of the various norms of good speech appears; a wider range of permissible variations of standard usage is recognized. There is justification, however, of the British fear of being Americanized. There seems to be far more danger of our influencing British English than of our become Briticized. Nowhere in England is Americanization more apparent than in the field of speech. The very men who write irefully of the latest importation from this country use in their objurgations words or phrases formerly decried as of American origin. A recent letter to me from a scholarly British acquaintance suggests that, "A British traveler in America will end by believing that English speech will never have any influence in America, but perhaps the reverse will happen, and the American visitor to London fifty years hence will be hailed in his own idiom. We naturally, however, prefer our own usages." Americans may be glad to know that the potentialities of their speech are now recognized overseas, yet no one in this country wishes New-World English to supplant British English in England itself. Thinking people welcome the present tendency toward compromise and minimizing. Though there are and must be divergences, it is to be hoped that they will remain minor shadings rather than fundamental differentiations. Whatever the future holds for the English language, on ancestral soil, on colonial soil, or on adopted soil, severance cannot be contemplated with enthusiasm. The gain of keeping diverging brands of English speech fairly close together is too great to be yielded sooner than is inevitable.

## THE AMERICAN DIALECT OF CHARLES DICKENS

Two of Dickens's books have to do with America and Americans. His *American Notes* was published in two volumes in 1842. In January of that year he sailed from Liverpool to Boston, proceeded to Washington and Richmond, and thence to Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, and St. Louis. From Cincinnati he went to Niagara Falls at the end of April, next spent two months in Canada, and sailed from Canada to England at the end of May. During his stay in this country he was received everywhere with great acclaim. He records his travels with comments on what he observed or experienced, sometimes comments of approval, sometimes of unmistakable disapproval. His account of Western democracy, which he came here to view for himself, is humorous but hardly roseate. The barbarity of the slave system shocked him especially. In his report of conditions he quoted devastatingly from the *Washington Gazette* the advertisements of slaves for sale, many of them scarred or otherwise mutilated. And he was irked that America had been allowed to pirate his most popular works, a situation unchanged when he made his second trip to America in November, 1867. His testimony concerning our national ways irritated many and brought violent protests from others. Carlyle commented that it caused 'all Yankee-doodledom to fizz like one universal soda-water bottle.' Dickens wrote to John Forster, August 15, 1843, 'I gather from

letters I have had that Martin made them stark staring raving mad across the water.'

Dickens's *Martin Chuzzlewit*, his second book dealing with America, was published in 1844, originally in monthly numbers from January, 1843, onward. In this book he suddenly takes, in the fifteenth chapter, Martin and his devoted Mark Tapley to America. Here they encounter journalists, politicians, boarding house keepers, and swindling land agents who sell them unhealthy swamp land in new 'Eden'. After surviving the malaria fatal to most of Eden's inhabitants, they manage, in the thirty-fourth chapter, to get back to England. Dickens's dismal picture of Eden seems to have been influenced by his financial loss in Cairo, Illinois, bonds ultra-optimistically promoted in England.

There is also a short story with an American setting which, so far as I can learn, is not included in his collected works nor mentioned by his bibliographers or biographers.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps it was overlooked because it appeared in an American periodical. *Harper's Weekly* in the early 1860's printed fiction by leading English novelists such as Bulwer Lytton, Wilkie Collins, and Charles Reade. In the issue for January 4, 1862, appeared (under the heading, 'Charles Dickens's New Christmas Stories') 'Picking Up Evening Shadows' (a London story) and 'Picking Up a Pocket Book.' The latter, curiously enough, is what we now call a 'Western.' Its hero, George Walford, who keeps books for a San Francisco firm and is engaged to the daughter of one of his employers, is sent posthaste to New York City to prevent the cashing of a cheque and the negotiation of securities, these in the hands of a notorious swindler. Walford travels from sea to sea, over mountains and prairies fraught with dangers, especially from Indian encounters. The most perilous part of the road is that between California and the Mormon settlements in Utah. Walford succeeds by a lucky chance in his mission in New York City, returns to San Francisco, and marries his employer's daughter. 'Picking Up Evening Shadows' seems unmistakably by Dickens, and I find no reason for doubting the authenticity of the accompanying story.

<sup>1</sup> My attention was called to this story by my colleague, Mamie J. Meredith. Neither of these *Harper's Weekly* stories is mentioned in Alexander Philip's *A Dickens Dictionary* (London, 1909), or in Arthur L. Hayward's *The Dickens Encyclopaedia* (London, 1924) or William Miller's *The Dickens Student and Collector* (Harvard University Press, 1946), and they are not referred to in the leading accounts of Dickens which I have consulted.



Published long after *Martin Chuzzlewit*, the dialect of 'Picking Up a Pocket Book' varies a little from that of the earlier works. Most of it is placed in the mouth of a Kentuckian, one of the riders of the Pony Express. Hence it is hardly to be expected that his dialect would be *verbatim* that of the Atlantic Coast.<sup>2</sup>

The language ascribed to our countrymen has interest for us, since it comes from a novelist of the stature of Dickens and since it records his idea of how Americans talked in his day. On the whole he lays on his American dialect rather thickly, but no more so than did certain early American humorists and less thickly than did Lowell in the *Biglow Papers*. Certainly it is not used so liberally as to hamper readability. Archaic forms lingering in the sub-standard speech of both England and America (*afore*, *agone*, *pizen*, *sartain*, etc.) remind one of those of Cooper's Leatherstocking. But Dickens is more consistent than Cooper. Leatherstocking sometimes speaks in literary poetic language, especially in rhapsodic passages about nature (which Dickens's Americans never do), while at other times his language is old-fashioned and dialectal.

Dickens's American characters are nearly always pretentious and complacent. We listen to Colonel Diver of the New York *Rowdy Journal*, to Jefferson Brick his foreign correspondent, to Elijah Pogram, member of Congress, to Pro-fessor Mullitt and Jineral Fladdock, to the dwellers in Major Pawkins's boarding house and to the aggressive Mrs. Hominy. His Americans have tag mannerisms. They are caricatures embodying certain characteristics, as is so often to be expected from this novelist. But they are no more eccentric and little more addicted to dialect than are his English characters, such as Mrs. Gamp (who was the most popular feature of *Martin Chuzzlewit*) or Sam Weller. One can understand, however, that they made contemporary American readers restive. Dickens tends to picture our countrymen as offensive, conceited, bad-mannered, and ignorant, but he does so humorously. Even a hundred years later his pictures seem to me richly entertaining, to Americans themselves as well as to their critics.

A few preliminary remarks deserve citation before there is examination of details. An early remark made in a letter from Boston, January 29, 1842, to John Forster reads:

<sup>2</sup> Differences are chiefly in the Kentuckian's *fust* (first), *gret* (great), *ha'r*, *hoss*, *Injuns*. *jest* (just), *kipple* ('a kipple of nags'), *waal*, *wuss* (worse), *youarn*, and the verb forms *ax* (ask), *ain't* (*an't* is more frequent in the earlier works), *'tain't*, *harn't* (haven't), *warn't* (weren't).

I will only say now . . . that but for an odd phrase now and then—such as snap of cold weather; a tongue-y fellow; Possible? as a solitary interrogation; and Yes? for indeed—I should have marked, so far, no differences whatever between parties here and those I have left behind.

In the fourth chapter of *American Notes*, describing a train trip, he reproduces a dialogue which he suggests is typical:

Everybody talks to you, or to anybody else who hits his fancy. If you are an Englishman, he expects that that railroad is pretty much like an English railroad. If you say 'No,' he says 'Yes?' (interrogatively), and asks in what respects they differ. You enumerate the heads of difference, one by one, and he says 'Yes?' (still interrogatively) to each. Then he guesses that you don't travel faster in England; and on your replying that you do, says 'Yes?' again (still interrogatively), and, it is quite evident, don't believe it. After a long pause he remarks, partly to you, and partly to the knob on the top of his stick, that 'Yankees are reckoned to be considerable of a go-ahead people too;' upon which you say 'Yes,' and then he says 'Yes' again (affirmatively this time); and upon your looking out of window, tells you that behind that hill, and some three miles from the next station, there is a clever town in a smart lo-ca-tion, where he expects you have concluded to stop. Your answer in the negative naturally leads to more questions in reference to your intended route (always pronounced rout); and wherever you are going, you invariably learn that you can't get there without immense difficulty and danger, and that all the great sights are somewhere else.

There is a satirical passage, one of the most disparaging, in a letter to Forster of April 15, 1842:

A St. Louis lady complimented Kate upon her voice and manner of speaking, assuring her that she would never have suspected her of being Scotch or even English. She was so obliging as to add that she would have taken her for an American, anywhere; which she (Kate) was no doubt aware was a very great compliment, as the Americans were admitted on all hands to have greatly refined upon the English language! I need not tell you that out of Boston and New York a nasal drawl is universal, but I may as well hint that the prevailing grammar is also more than doubtful; that the oddest vulgarisms are received idioms; that all the women who have been bred in slave-States speak more or less like Negroes, from having been constantly in their childhood with black nurses; and that the most fashionable and aristocratic (these two words in great use), instead of asking you in what place you were born, inquire where you 'hail from.'

In a letter of February 24, 1842, Dickens is able to write the American language himself:

Add to all this that by day and night she [the steamer] is full of fire and people, that she has no boats, and that the struggling of that enormous machinery in a heavy sea seems as though it would rend her into fragments—and you may have a pretty considerable damned good sort of a feeble notion

that it don't fit nohow; and that it a'n't calculated to make you smart overmuch; and that you don't feel special bright; and by no means first-rate; and not at all tongue-y (or disposed for conversation); and that however rowdy you may be by natur', it does use you up com-pletely and that's a fact; and makes you quake considerable, and disposed toe damn the engine!—All which phrases, I beg to add, are pure Americanisms of the first water.

The distinctive words and recurrent expressions constituting the salient Americanisms of the speakers are on the whole rather stock. Hardest worked are the usual *I guess, reckon, calculate, and I expect* for *I suppose*. Other stock expressions are *do tell, admire* ('I admire at this,' 'I admire at your good fortune'), *I do declare, considerable seldom*. One character remarks, 'If you should set your back right slap agin that curtain, we should be fixed quite slick.' Another speaks of 'Almighty strong stuff.' The authoress Mrs. Hominy inquires of Martin Chuzzlewit, 'Where do you hail from? Where was you rose?'

Included in the vocabularies of the speakers are: *Almighty dollar, ba'ars* (bears), *bamfoozling, dander, darnation, darned, diggings, disputate, disputation, eloquential, fixings* (food), *greenhorn, kiender* (kind of), *leastways, leetle, loaf, locofocoed, lumber* ('the timber, or lumber as it is called in America'), *noggin* (of drink), *opinionate, pesky, this here, tongue-y, right away* ('right away and directly mean the same thing'), *ring-tailed roarer, screamer, slant-in'dicularly, spanker* ('her [the ship's] passage is almost certain to eventuate a spanker'), *spanking* ('she [the ship] had a spanking run').

Dialect verb forms, many archaic in both English and American usage, are: *afeard, air* (are), *an't and ain't* (isn't), *'tain't, fit* (fought), *kiuvered, knowed, med* (made), *ped* (paid), *skear, ris, stole* as a past participle ('you'll just get your horse stole or chawed up by the wolves'). Pronominal forms are *hisself, tellee, yourn*. Most of these verb and pronoun forms are used by Dickens's English speakers as well as by his Americans.

Regarding our American uses of *fix*, he commented at length in a letter to Forster of March 21, 1842:

I told you of the many uses of the word 'fix.' I ask Mr. Q on board a steamboat if breakfast be nearly ready, and he tells me he should think so, for when he was last below the steward was 'fixing the tables'—in other words laying the cloth. When we have been writing, and I beg him (do you remember anything of my love of order at this difference of time?) to collect our papers, he answers that he'll 'fix 'em presently.' So, when a man's dressing

he's 'fixing' himself, and when you put yourself under a doctor's care he 'fixes' you in no time. T'other night, before we came on board here, when I had ordered a bottle of mulled claret and waited some time for it, it was put on the table with an apology from the landlord (a lieutenant-colonel) that he 'feared that it wasn't fixed properly.' And here on Saturday morning, a Western man, handing the potatoes to Mr. Q at breakfast, inquired if he wouldn't take some of these 'fixings' with his meat. I remained grave as a judge. I catch them looking at me sometimes and feel that they think I don't take any notice.

In the same passage, reproduced in *American Notes* (Chapter X), a stern gentleman asks a waiter 'whether he called *that* [underdone roast beef] fixing God Almighty's vittles?' In Washington Dickens noted (Chapter VIII) that 'At the third [shop], which is a very very very little shop, pants are fixed to order; or in other words, pantaloons are made to measure.'

Dickens's interest extended to pronunciation as well as to vocabulary and grammatical forms. The characteristic of New World utterance that he illustrated oftenest is the protraction of the initial syllable of trisyllabic words having penultimate accent, and sometimes of dissyllabic words also. This comes from the mouths of many persons, journalists, a member of Congress, a professor, Mrs. Hominy, and others, in general those impressed with their own importance. These might be called, I suppose, stretch forms: *ac-quire*, *a-larming*, *a-live*, *a-mazing*, *as-TONishing*, *Co-lumbia*, *con-sider*, *do-minion*, *e-motion*, *ene-mies*, *en-tirely*, *e-tarnal*, *ex-alted*, *ex-citement*, *gen-teel*, *ho-tel*, *lë-vee* (also *leVEE*), *lo-cation*, *na-tive*, *o-ration*, *po-session*, *pre-diction*, *pre-ju-dice*, *pro-fessor*, *pro-gress*, *re-ceive*, *re-quest*, *re-tard*, *sure-ly*, *U-nited States*.

Similar protracted forms come from the mouths of Dickens's characters in his English novels, but in less degree. Of Colonel Diver of the New York *Rowdy Journal*, Dickens says that 'He emphasized all the small words and syllables in his discourse, and left the others to take care of themselves, as if he thought the larger parts of speech could be trusted alone, but the little ones required to be constantly looked after.'

The pronunciation of *prairie* intrigued him especially. 'I may premise,' he writes (*American Notes*, Chapter XIII), 'that the word *Prairie* is variously pronounced *paraaer*, *parearer*, and *paroarer*. The latter mode of pronunciation is perhaps the most in favour.' In the Western story he has *parara* and *parar*. The Honorable Elijah Pogram, member of Congress, remarks in *Martin Chuzzlewit*

(Chapter XXXIV) of a gentleman named Chollop that 'he is . . . unspiled by withering conventionalities as air our broad and boundless Percarers.'

The diphthong [ɔɪ] may be archaic [aɪ], standard enough in 18th century England: *biler*, *chisest*, *jined*, *pinted*, *rile up*, and archaic [ar] appears in *desarted*, *etarnal*, *sartainly*. The forms *ac-tive*, *en-gine*, *na-tive*, *pre-ju-dice* preserve the older fuller last syllable. *Obleeged*, *airth*, *toe* for 'to' ('You have much Toe learn and Toe enjoy, sir') are archaic also. Syncope of the middle syllable appears in *circ'lar*, *Gen'ral*, *calc'late*, *partic'lar*, *nat'rally*, *unnat'ral*. 'Monument' becomes *moniment*, and 'perhaps' *p'raps*, as it still does. There is weakening of the final syllable in *fortun'*, *misfortins*, *natur'*, *statter*, and of both syllables in *critter*. Other vowel divergencies from the standard appear in *enquerry*, *discoorse*, *bam* for 'balm,' *leetle*, *Americay*, *Californy*, *Europian* (probably accented on the second syllable), *Virginny*, *theer* for 'there,' *agin*. The word *route*, as already quoted from *American Notes*, is always pronounced 'rout.' In a passage from the same book (Chapter X), a man 'from the brown forests of the Mississippi' says 'This company wants a little fixing, *it* does. . . . This is piling it up too moūntainoūs, this is.'

As for consonants, *r* is lost in *cusses*, *just*, *skase*, *wust* and added in *arternoon*, *buffalers*, *darter*, *oughter*, *punkin sarse*. In the words *allays*, *backards*, *upards*, the *w* is lost. In *onst*, a *t* is added, *wh* is substituted for *w* in Elijah Pogram's *whithering* (Chapter XXXIV), and folk-etymology appears in his 'This morbid hatred of our institutions is quite a study for the physchological observer.' In some editions these last two forms are normalized.

In a passage in *American Notes* (Chapter XIV) Dickens returns to the recurrent American 'yes' habit:

Whenever the coach stops, and you can hear the voices of the inside passengers; or whenever any bystander addresses them, or any one among them; or they address each other; you will hear one phrase repeated over and over and over again to the most extraordinary extent. It is an ordinary and unpromising phrase enough, being neither more nor less than 'Yes, sir;' but it is adapted to every variety of circumstance, and fills up every pause in the conversation. Thus:—

The time is one o'clock at noon. The scene, a place where we are to stay to dine, on this journey. The coach drives up to the door of an inn. The day is warm, and there are several idlers lingering about the tavern, and waiting for the public dinner. Among them is a stout gentleman in a brown hat, swinging himself to and fro in a rocking-chair on the pavement.

As the coach stops, a gentleman in a straw hat looks out of the window:

STRAW HAT. (To the stout gentleman in the rocking-chair.) I reckon that's Judge Jefferson, an't it?

BROWN HAT. (Still swinging; speaking very slowly; and without any emotion whatever.) Yes, Sir.

STRAW HAT. Warm weather, Judge.

BROWN HAT. Yes, Sir.

STRAW HAT. There was a snap of cold, last week.

BROWN HAT. Yes, Sir.

STRAW HAT. Yes Sir.

A pause. They look at each other very seriously.

STRAW HAT. I calculate you'll have got through that case of the corporation, Judge, by this time, now?

BROWN HAT. Yes, Sir.

STRAW HAT. How did the verdict go, Sir?

BROWN HAT. For the defendant, Sir.

STRAW HAT. (Interrogatively.) Yes, Sir?

BROWN HAT. (Affirmatively.) Yes, Sir.

BOTH. (Musingly, as each gazes down the street.) Yes, Sir.

Another pause. They look at each other again, still more seriously than before.

BROWN HAT. This coach is rather behind its time today, I guess.

STRAW HAT. (Doubtingly.) Yes, Sir.

BROWN HAT. (Looking at his watch.) Yes, Sir; nigh upon two hours.

STRAW HAT. (Raising his eyebrows in very great surprise.) Yes, Sir!

BROWN HAT. (Decisively, as he puts up his watch.) Yes, Sir.

ALL THE OTHER INSIDE PASSENGERS (among themselves.) Yes, Sir.

COACHMAN (in a very surly tone.) No it an't.

STRAW HAT. (To the coachman.) Well, I don't know, Sir. We were a pretty tall time coming that last fifteen mile. That's a fact.

The coachman making no reply, and plainly declining to enter into any controversy on a subject so far removed from his sympathies and feelings, another passenger says, 'Yes, Sir;' and the gentleman in the straw hat in acknowledgement of his courtesy, says 'Yes, Sir,' to him in return. The straw hat then inquires of the brown hat, whether that coach in which he (the straw hat) then sits is not a new one? To which the brown hat again makes answer, 'Yes, Sir.'

STRAW HAT. I thought so. Pretty loud smell of varnish, Sir?

BROWN HAT. Yes, Sir.

ALL THE OTHER INSIDE PASSENGERS. Yes, Sir.

BROWN HAT (to the company in general). Yes, Sir.

Later in life, Dickens felt better disposed toward America and wrote of it in a favorable and friendly way. He visited this country for a second time in 1867-68. In his remarks at a Public Dinner given him on Saturday, April 16, 1868, he expressed a high sense of appreciation of his second reception here. He professed himself astounded by the

. . . amazing changes I have seen around me on every side,—changes moral, changes physical, changes in the amount of land subdued and peopled, changes in the rise of vast new cities, changes in the growth of older cities almost out of recognition, changes in the graces and amenities of life, changes in the Press, without whose advancement no advancement can take place anywhere. Nor am I, believe me, so arrogant as to suppose that in five and twenty years there have been no changes in me, and that I had nothing to learn and no extreme impressions to correct when I was here first.

. . . I have been received with unsurpassable politeness, delicacy, sweet temper, hospitality, consideration, and with unsurpassable respect for the privacy daily enforced upon me by the nature of my avocation here and the state of my health. This testimony, so long as I live, and so long as my descendants have any legal right in my books, I shall cause to be republished, as an appendix to every copy of those two books of mine in which I have referred to America.

1947

AMERICAN EUPHEMISMS FOR DYING,  
DEATH, AND BURIAL  
AN ANTHOLOGY

The superstition that to name a thing is to gain power over it seems to receive little credence when death and its trappings are concerned. It appears, in fact, that one of mankind's gravest problems is to avoid a straightforward mention of dying or burial. Every ingenuity is practiced to find words which will shroud the idea of death. The number and variety of such euphemisms is amazing, and, although a list of the expressions may not be of much value, a curious interest attaches to them. They represent an essential human trait which to the devout may seem an inherent reverence before the name of a mystery, to the cynical a cowardly evasion of reality.

The following expressions were collected from time to time in a purely incidental fashion. They came largely from oral sources, sermons and conversations, with occasional expressions from newspapers and books. For the sake of imposing limitations, only American expressions have been listed, although, of course, many of these are traditional from Britain or are held in common with the mother country. All of the material, including the older literary expressions, came from the current usage of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. No earlier sources were used. It is doubtless true that of late certain taboos have been dropped and, as regards death as



well as life, downright words are often preferred to periphrases. Yet scores and scores of euphemistic terms are still in use.

Because certain expressions seem related, they are grouped together in the following six sections. Many smaller classes might have been possible or even advisable, but for convenience these larger general divisions have been made, with only a few subdivisions. It would be absurd to claim that the lists given here are exhaustive. They never could be complete; but they may at least give an idea of the number and variety of ways in which English-speaking people have been able to suggest without actually naming dying, death, and burial.

### I. SENTIMENTAL AND POETIC EXPRESSIONS

By far the greater number of current euphemisms are sentimental or poetic. Some of them have a high literary ancestry; others are the inventions of modern funeral orators or newspaper biographers. In all there is an attempt to evoke gentle emotions and to find in death and burial a melancholy romance or noble dignity. Shakespeare supplied several of the figures, Homer at least one, and the Scriptures half a dozen others. Even the American Indian influence may be detected in a small group of expressions.

In this section are listed the various personifications of death, metaphors of light and darkness, sleep and rest, and the familiar figures of departure, setting out, or return, in which death becomes a journey. There is genuine poetry in many of the expressions, but more often the effect is that of a pointless substitute for straightforward speech. A jarring element obtrudes itself as the metaphor shifts from the 'flickering lamp' to the 'run-down clock,' from the 'fiddle and the bow' to the 'knife and fork,' and legend chronicles as the ultimate failure the trope of the rattled clergyman who said, pointing to the corpse, 'This is only the shell—the nut is gone.'

### GENERAL LITERARY AND FIGURATIVE EXPRESSIONS

Released from the burden of the weary world.	The golden cord is severed.
Laid down his burden.	The thread is snapped.
Laid down the burden of life's weary load.	Taken to Paradise.
The lamp of life flickered out.	Translated into another world.
The dews of death were upon him.	Joined the great majority.
The cord is broken.	Is out of his misery.
	Breathed his last.
	Called home.

Called to his reward/final reward.  
 Fallen by the wayside.  
 Met his end.  
 Gathered to his fathers.  
 His soul has flown.  
 He has left us.  
 The Angel of Death claimed him.  
 Her frail tabernacle drifted away.  
 Consigned to the earth.  
 Put under a little mound of earth.  
 Enshrined in his mausoleum.  
 His light is put out.  
 Has clothed himself in light.  
 Withdrawn in silence from the living.  
 Left this earthly life.  
 Granted/given/handed his quietus.  
 Suffered the last great change.  
 Life's last demand has been met.  
 The immortal occupant has deserted  
     its tenancy/tenement.  
 He lay down in darkness and his light  
     is in ashes.  
 Called to God.  
 Called to Jesus.  
 Called beyond.  
 Called hence.  
 Launched into eternity.  
 God in his providence saw fit to re-  
     move him.  
 He has left a vacant chair.  
 He gave up earthly life.  
 The angel of death claimed him in his  
     youth.  
 His clock has run down.  
 Slipped into the great democracy of  
     the dead.  
 Passed from earth's uncertainties into  
     the infinite varieties.

Passed into the sleep which knows no  
     earthly waking.  
 Clashed in the cold embrace of death.  
 Climbed the golden stair.  
 Answered the call of the unknown.  
 Is with the angels.  
 Has paid the last tribute/debt of na-  
     ture.  
 Is now playing the harp.  
 Has laid down the knife and fork.  
 Laid away.  
 Laid/placed under the daisies.  
 Laid under the sod.  
 Laid in the cold, cold ground.  
 Borne forth amid the daisies.  
 Hung up the fiddle and the bow.  
     (From the songs by Stephen C. Fos-  
     ter 'Old Uncle Ned' and 'Massa's in  
     the Cold Cold Ground.')  
 Bit the dust. (Homer.)  
 Gave up the ghost. (Shakespeare.)  
 Shuffled off this mortal coil. (Shake-  
     speare.)  
 There cracked a noble heart. (Shake-  
     speare.)  
 For him the sunset gates unbarred.  
     (From Whittier's 'Snowbound'.)

### *Personifications of Death*

The Grim Reaper.  
 The Pale Horseman.  
 The Spoiler.  
 The Destroying Angel.  
 The Grim Monster.  
 The Twin Brother of Sleep.  
 The Arch Foe.

### METAPHORS OF SLEEP AND REST

Gone to enduring sleep.  
 Asleep in Jesus.  
 Safe in the arms of Jesus.  
 Asleep in the valley.  
 Fallen asleep in God.  
 Sunk into his last sleep.  
 Sleeps the long sleep.  
 Sleeps with his fathers.

Is sleeping the final sleep.  
 Gone to the mansions of rest.  
 Gone to his last sleep.  
 Gone to a well-earned rest.  
 Called to heavenly rest.  
 Laid to rest.  
 Fallen quietly into the sleep which  
     knows no earthly waking.

Rests in peace till we meet again.  
Gone to rest from his long labors.

Sleeps the sleep that knows no waking.  
(From Scott's *The Lady of the Lake*.)  
Called to the eternal sleep.

### METAPHORS OF DEPARTURE, SETTING OUT, RETURN

Passed on/away/out/over.  
Passed to a better home.  
Passed/crossed over the river.  
Passed to his reward.  
Passed from the shadows below to the  
  sunlight above.  
Passed into the unknown night.  
Passed within the\*pearly gates.  
Crossed/gone over the range.  
Crossed the bar/barrier/frontier/bor-  
  der.  
Crossed over.  
Crossed/passed/went over the Great  
Divide.  
Slipped into outer darkness.

Gone from us.  
Gone hence.

Gone to his Heavenly Father.  
Gone to meet his Saviour.  
Gone to Abraham's bosom.  
Gone to his fathers.  
Gone out the darkness into the light.  
Gone up yonder.  
Gone to meet his Maker.  
Gone to his reward.  
Gone to his account.  
Gone to his long home.  
Gone to the Great Adventure.  
Gone to prepare a place for us.  
Gone the way of all flesh.  
Gone out of the darkness into the  
  light.  
Gone to the Happy Hunting Grounds.  
  (Indian.)  
Gone to see the face of Wakondah.  
  (Indian.)

Gone forward.  
Gone onward.  
Gone home.  
Gone aloft.  
Gone through the Black Door.  
Gone to Heaven.  
Gone to his heavenly home.  
Gone to the marble city where you  
  and I are going.  
Gone beyond the horizon.  
Gone to meet the beyond.  
Gone to the Great Beyond.  
Gone to stand before the Great White  
  Throne.  
Gone to the land of Heart's Desire.  
Gone to the land of Cockaigne.  
Gone to Glory.  
Gone over the border.  
Gone to the sweet bye-and-bye.  
Gone West. (Indian. Also used in  
  France during World War.)  
Gone to the bourne whence no travel-  
  er returns. (Shakespeare.)

Went out with the ebb.  
Went to Jordan's banks.  
Slipped into outer darkness.  
Was guided into the shade.  
Descended into the valley of the  
  shadow.  
Hit the long trail.  
Exited.  
Reached his journey's end.  
Returned to his native soil.  
Departed this life.  
Entered the marble orchard.  
The bell rang and he went.  
At five o'clock in the morning she  
  plumed the wings of her soul and  
  took her flight to glory.

## II. FLIPPANT AND SLANG EXPRESSIONS

As a reaction, no doubt, against the tradition of sentiment, slang and flippancy in the mention of death enjoy a certain favor. No single class is answerable for the popularity of these expressions. College students and pioneer farmers, gangsters and playwrights have all had a part in their creation, and they are kept alive by speakers of every sort. There is a little humor, much vulgarity, and a general spirit of defiance and insolence in the terms. While some of them are actually descriptive, others, particularly contemporary slang from the world of the outlaw, have an esoteric quality. To the more obscure of these expressions definitions have been attached. The terms at the end of the list, from *Take for a ride on*, are from contemporary criminal slang.

Winked out.  
 Shuffled off.  
 Ran down.  
 Kicked the bucket.  
 Kissed the dust.  
 Petered out.  
 Coiled up his cables.  
 Turned up his toes.  
 Cocked up his toes.  
 Turned up his toes to the daisies.  
 Is done for/erased/finished/flattened out.  
 Is a deader.  
 Is a goner.  
 Now installed in Furnace No. 10.  
 Went bung.  
 Salted down.  
 Placed on the shelf.  
 Gone under.  
 Gone cold.  
 Popped off.  
 Hopped the twig.  
 Dropped off.  
 Bound for glory.  
 His goose is cooked.  
 Got the ax.  
 Snuffed it.  
 Snuffed out.  
 Now picking at the coverlet.  
 Made a die of it.  
 Knocked off/up/over.  
 Knocked the daylight out of.

Went up the handle.  
 Croaked.  
 Went home feet first.  
 Became filling for a casket.  
 Is counting the worms.  
 They put the skids under him and kicked him into the Great Beyond.  
 Planted. (Pioneers' slang.)  
 Is holding up the Bermuda (grass).  
 He has a little garden on his stomach.  
 Is lying on the cooling board.  
 Gone to kingdom come.  
 Placed in cold storage.  
 Put to bed with a shovel.  
 Is pushing up the daisies.  
 Gone to grass.  
 Grounded for good.  
 Paid St. Peter a visit.  
 Went pfft. (From flattening automobile tires.)  
 Stepped off the deep end.  
 Stepped into his last bus.  
 Is counting the daisy roots.  
 Is pushing the clouds around/about.  
 His hash is settled.  
 Is potted/gone to pot. (Reference to urn burial.)  
 Got his everlasting.  
 Made a stiff.  
 Gone home in a box.  
 Finishee. (Pidgin English.)  
 Mak finishee. (Pidgin.)

Makee die. (Pidgin.)  
 Catchee killum. (Pidgin.)  
 Take for a ride.  
 Bump off.  
 Put on the spot.  
 Give lead poison.  
 Liquidate.  
 Give the works.  
 Put on ice.  
 Give the heat.  
 Give the rap.

Let the daylight into.  
 Drill.  
 Fog (shoot).  
 Send by the gun/rod/pistol route.  
 Put the cross on (mark for death).  
 Rub out. (A *rubber* is a professional killer.)  
 Wipe out.  
 Give a pineapple (bomb).  
 Take the back gate parole. (Die in prison.)

### III. TERMS FROM WORK AND RECREATION

Another group is composed of metaphors from a variety of human activities. The expressions in the first part of the section derive from the occupations, professions, and trades. As might be expected, several of the figures originate in the business of war; a few of the others are nautical, and a miscellaneous group represents a range of pursuits from banking to butchering. Among the figures in the second division are those taken from sports and recreations. Here are terms from the theater, moving pictures, the prize ring, racing, hunting, football, and cards. They show much of the levity of the expressions in the foregoing section, and, like many of these, gain effectiveness from the incongruity between implication and actual expression. Most of the terms listed here are self-explanatory.

#### METAPHORS FROM OCCUPATIONS, PROFESSIONS, AND TRADES

Stopped a shrapnel.  
 Stopped a bullet.  
 Answered the last roll call.  
 Answered the last muster.  
 Heard the final call.  
 Received the final call.  
 Fired his last shot.  
 Gave up the ship.  
 Went to Davy Jones's locker.  
 Spilled the drink.  
 Fed the fishes (died by drowning).  
 Dropped off the hooks. (From butchering.)  
 Died in harness (at work).  
 It was '30' for him, flashed across the unending wires. ('30' is the newsman's and telegrapher's sign that he has come to the end of the string, or the day's work.)

Checked out.  
 Passed in his checks.  
 Cashed his checks.  
 Handed in his checks.  
 Went to the pay off.  
 Died with his boots on. (From range riding.)  
 Laid down the shovel and the hoe.  
 (From Stephen C. Foster's song, 'Old Uncle Ned'.)  
 Closed up his accounts with the world.  
 Answered the final/last summons.  
 (Perhaps legal.)  
 The tailor (undertaker) measured the man for a new overcoat (casket).  
 Pulled in at the last terminal. (Railroading.)  
 Went to the last roundup.

## METAPHORS FROM SPORTS AND RECREATIONS

Played his last card.	His number was up.
Went to the races.	Jumped his last hurdle.
Ran the good race.	Is knocked out.
His race is run.	He took the last/the long, long count.
Pegged out. (Cribbage.)	(Prize fighting.)
Struck out. (Baseball.)	Threw in the sponge. (Boxing.)
Kicked off. (Football.)	Passed from the picture.
Took the jump.	Made a fadeout.
The curtain for him. (Theater.)	Handed in his chips. (Poker.)
Took the curtain call.	Threw sixes. (Dice.)
Has taken his last cue from life's stage.	

## IV. TERMS FOR HANGING, LYNCHING, AND ELECTROCUTION

A number of expressions, largely from the criminal world, have been evolved to cover the horrors of hanging, lynching, and electrocution. They are grim in their playfulness and often only too pictorial. Among the older expressions are those which designate hanging and lynching. They come for the most part from the sixties and seventies and suggest the lawlessness of the West in the early days. Of more recent origin are the euphemisms for electrocution. They are more terse and forbidding than the word itself, yet somehow suggestive of nonchalance in the face of punishment. The terms from *Burn* on are used for electrocution.

Kicked the clouds/air/wind.	Justly jerk.
Go up.	Jerk to Jesus.
Go up a tree.	Legally lasso.
Put on the hempen collar/cravat/necktie/necklace/anodyne necklace/choker/halter.	Give the rope.
Put in a state of suspense.	Die in a horse's nightcap.
Hoist.	Give the California collar.
Salivate.	Neck.
Stretch.	Hold a necktie party (lynch).
Swing.	Give a lynching bee.
Run up.	Yield to Judge Lynch.
Tuck up.	Hold a dance of death.
Turn off.	Burn.
Top.	Cook.
Scrag.	Fry.
String up.	Fry in the chair.
Exalt.	Be jumped.
Crack the neck.	Ride Old Smoky.
Cause to die of a hempen fever.	Take the smoky seat/rocker.
	Burn in the chair/flame chair/juice chair/hot seat.

Take the hot squat.

Heat the hot spot.

Take the hot/warm sit-down.

Take the electric cure.

Take the juice/shock.

Step into the chair.

Get a permanent wave.

Sit down and burn up.

## V. MISCELLANEOUS EUPHEMISMS

Even more necessary than circumlocutions for the abstract idea of death, are those to suggest the material adjuncts of the funeral and burial. The corpse, the coffin, and the cemetery are given new names, sometimes jocose, often serious. Even the name of the dead person is avoided by means of a series of pious epithets. Eulogists and scoffers alike shun a forthright mention of the concrete evidences of death. The elaborateness of the figures suggests the strength of the taboo.

*The Dead*

The defunct.

The departed.

The deceased.

The late lamented.

The body.

The remains.

Food for worms.

Late specimen of humanity.

The broken pitcher. (Clergyman: 'Useless now this broken pitcher.')

Cold meat. (The hearse is the 'cold meat cart.')

*Coffin*

Wooden overcoat.

Wooden kimono.

Crate.

Planting crate.

Six-foot bungalow.

Wooden suit.

Casket.

Box.

Bone box.

Man box.

Bone house.

Cold meat box.

Eternity box.

*The Cemetery*

The marble orchard.

The bone orchard.

The Marble City.

The boneyard.

Memorial park.

Permanent rest camp.

City/village of the dead.

Skeleton park.

Hell's half acre.

Underground jungle.

Last home.

*The Grave*

Long home.

Cold mud.

Deep six.

Earth bath.

Dust bin.

Great divide.

A neat oblong hole in the ground.

Narrow home.

*The Funeral*

Buryin'.

Dead march.

Planting.

Cold meat party.

## VI. PREDICTIONS OF DEATH

It is quite as difficult to prophesy death as to announce it, and to smooth the difficulty various periphrases have been invented. Although many of the predictions are jocular, they derive from the same instinct that prompts the creation of the serious euphemisms. Man evades the mention of death either as an accomplished fact or an inevitable outcome. His scruples may goad him to painful exertion but they are always obeyed, and nothing can be more circuitous than the sayings that result.

You'll wake up some morning and find  
some one patting you in the face  
with a spade.

Your number is up.

You are on your last legs/pegs.

You are slated for a fancy epitaph.

You have one foot in the grave and  
another on a banana peel.

You have no more chance than a rabbit.

One more clean shirt is all you'll  
need.

We'll be looking at each other and one  
of us won't know it.

Your expectancy of life is zero.

Soon you'll be lying down with a  
spade patting you in the face.

You'll be put to bed with a shovel.

Earth that nourished thee shall claim  
thy growth. (Bryant.)

You'll be sent home in a box.

Step softly, kind friend, for you, too,  
will meet your end. (On a tombstone.)

You are under sailing orders.

You'll soon hold a lily in your hand.  
They'll be playing slow music and you  
won't hear it.

You are booked.

There'll be eight going out and seven  
coming back. (From 'Frankie and  
Johnnie'.)

Tomorrow you'll be crowbait.



## WHITMAN AND THE FRENCH LANGUAGE

### I

The most striking feature of Whitman's curiously individual diction—that diction which he wished wholly to free from older poetical associations—is his importation of words and phrases from the Romance languages. His is a catholic and polyglot vocabulary. He liked slang and homely or colloquial words, like *gawk*, *blab*, *yawp*, to a degree that was striking in his day, although it would hardly attract attention now. And he is not free from lapses into archaic words, like *list* or *vouchsafe*, or the old form *camerado*, which he had from the pages of Sir Walter Scott. He was fond of coinages or truncations from the vernacular, like *civilizee*, *litterat*, *diminute*, or *presidentiad*; and he employs high-sounding Latinized terms like *omnistic* or *omnigenous*. But most of all, strangely enough in such a rejecter of the Old World and prophet of the New, he likes to sprinkle his pages with borrowings from the French. A specific exhibit of his Gallic importations has interest both for the student of his poetical dialect and for the linguistic student. What words from the French does he know? Which are his favorites? How does he use them and in what contexts?

No doubt Whitman's stay in New Orleans had much to do with his special liking for French and his degree of familiarity with it. His many Italian words like *romanza* or *cantabile* are largely musi-

cal, derived from his enthusiasm for Italian operatic music. From the Spanish, unless he writes directly of Spanish scenes and types and needs their vernacular names (as *matador*, *vaquero*), he uses but two words—picked up perhaps on his tour of the South and West. These are *Libertad* and *Americanos*. His numerous importations from the French are partly social, partly commercial and military, and partly literary, and he uses them under a variety of conditions. The display is a large one, especially for an author who was not a direct student of the language and who had never been in France.<sup>1</sup>

Whitman was always interested in and an admirer of the young Republic of France. He made it the subject of two poems. One was "O Star of France" (1870–1871), a message of hope after the Franco-German war.

Oh star! O ship of France, beat back and baffled long!  
Bear up O smitten orb! O ship continue on!

The other, "France—in the Eighteenth Year of These States," is also prophetic and hopeful—

Hence I sign this salute over the sea,  
And I do not deny that terrible red birth and baptism,  
But remember the little voice that I heard wailing and wait with perfect trust,  
no matter how long.

Whitman has much to say of France and French republicanism in his poetry but nothing of the French language. He nowhere gives his reasons for his conspicuous reliance upon it as an element in his poetical expression. When Lafayette came to the United States in 1824, he picked up Whitman, then a child of five, on a public occasion, and placed him where he could see what was going on. Whitman remembered the incident in later years. This may have stimulated his interest in democratic France, but it is unlikely to have had much to do with his predilection for French loan-words.

Sometimes Whitman employs French in his titles. He occasionally liked a foreign flavor when naming his poems. He gave two poems titles involving Italian words, "Finale to the Shore" and "To a Certain Cantatrice," others Latin titles, "Excelsior" and "Resur-

<sup>1</sup> Whitman's friends state that he greatly admired George Sand and used to carry about with him a copy of her *Consuelo*. Her novels were available in translation in the New York City of his day. Esther Shepherd's *Walt Whitman's Pose* (1938), emphasizes his indebtedness to the French writer.

gemus," and one a title from the Greek, "Eidolons." He used the French phrase "Salut au Monde" as a heading for an ambitious poem of greeting to all the world and a survey of its scenes and life.

*Salut au monde! . . . .*

Toward you all in America's name,

I raise high the perpendicular hand, I make the signal,

To remain after me in sight forever

For all the haunts and homes of men.

"Our Old Feuillage" is another poem of wide surveys—this time of American scenes only. The first and last lines of the poem, a fairly long one, are—

Always our old *feuillage*!

How can I but as here chanting, invite you for yourself to collect bouquets of the incomparable *feuillage* of these States?

His "To a Foiled European Révolutionnaire,"<sup>2</sup> inciting to courage the European "revolter, revoltress," is a third poem which involves a French element in its title.

Two of Whitman's French titles were not retained by him. In 1860 he published fifteen poems under the group name of "Enfans d'Adam." Their later name, "Children of Adam," was adopted in 1867, and fourteen poems were included. Later another was added to the original number, making sixteen in all, and the translated name was retained. In "Chants Democratic" of 1860 he included under the title "Répondez"<sup>3</sup> a poem first published in 1856, under another name, and discarded after 1876. It opens—

*Répondez! Répondez!*

(The war is completed—the price is paid—the title is settled beyond recall;)

Let everyone answer! let those who sleep be waked! let none evade!

Must we still go on with our affectations and sneaking?

The "Song of the Open Road" has the French exhortation "Allons!" as a sort of refrain. This is the only instance of the kind in Whitman's verse. The ninth section opens—

*Allons! Whoever you are come travel with me!*

And some of the succeeding paragraphs open—

<sup>2</sup> Spelled by Whitman with one *n*.

<sup>3</sup> This suggests a blend of French *répondez* (Old French *respondez*) and English *respond*.

*Allons!* we must not stop here . . . .

*Allons!* the inducements shall be greater . . . .

*Allons!* with power, liberty, the earth, the elements . . . .

*Allons!* from all formules!

*Allons!* yet take warning!

*Allons!* after the great Companions, and to belong to them!

*Allons!* to that which is endless as it was beginningless.

*Allons!* through struggles and wars!

*Allons!* the road is before us!

## II

Many of Whitman's favorite words from the French are agent nouns or personal nouns. The poet had people constantly in mind, types or classes especially, rather than individuals. He varies his English personal nouns by French nouns; or he likes to adorn his pages with French words for their own sake. Sometimes his loan words are manipulated. He prefers *habitan* or *savan* without their final consonant—a preference shared by some of his contemporaries—or *philosoph* (if this be from the French, not a Whitmanesque shortening of the English word) without its final vowel. In many instances his French needs correction.

It need hardly be remarked that French accents are handled very carelessly by Whitman. They are often omitted from his manuscript notes and in early editions. In later editions too, especially the cheaper popular editions, they are often omitted by his editors, or the grave accent used for the acute, and the like. In the lines cited in these pages the missing accent marks have been supplied.

Whitman's personal nouns or agent nouns include general words, commercial words, and substantivated participles. Examples from his prose are—

“. . . he issues from one of the fashionable *coiffeurs*,” Sketch of “John J. Jinglebrain,” *New Orleans Daily Crescent*, March 28, 1848. “The aim of all the *littérateurs* is to find something to make fun of.” *Democratic Vistas*. “. . . some rhyming hunks, or lascivious glib *roué*,” *Notes Left Over*. “. . . the Prince of Wales on his visit, and other *célèbres*.” *Death of Abraham Lincoln*. “. . . showing the laureate, too, the *attaché* of the throne, and most excellent, too,” *Poetry To-Day in America*. “Pfaff is a generous German *restaurateur*, silent, stout, jolly, and I should say the best selecter of champagne in America.” *Specimen Days*.

One feminine personal noun appears and one substantivated past participle.

"Miss Dusky Grisette is the young 'lady' who takes her stand of evenings upon the pavement opposite the St. Charles Hotel, for the praiseworthy purpose of selling a few flowers by retail." Sketch of "Miss Dusky Grisette," *Daily Crescent*, March 16, 1848. ". . . the lightning flashes and flights of the old prophets and *exaltés*, the spiritual poets and poetry of all lands." ". . . the old *exaltés* and poets." *Specimen Days*.

Whitman wrongly uses *écaille* for the agent noun *écaillers* in the following—

"To sell such is the business and daily care of those called, in common language, oystermen—the French style them *écaille*." Sketch of "Timothy Goujon," in New Orleans *Daily Crescent*, April 4, 1848.

Many examples of agent nouns appear in Whitman's poetry. There are words of all types, and considerable interest attaches to his employment of them.

*Habitués* of many distant countries, *habitués* of far-distant dwellings.

—*Song of the Open Road*, 12

I *habitan* of the Alleghanies, treating of him as he is in himself in his own rights (In first texts *habitué*)

—*To a Historian*

Not any *habitan* of America is to have one jot less than you or me

—*Poem of Remembrance for a Girl or Boy of These States*, 1856

(Later dropped)

. . . the *habitans*, threatening, ironical, scorning invaders

—*Our Old Feuillage*

. . . For noble *savans* and coming musicians

—*Laws for Creations*

I myself as connector, as *chansonnier* of a great future, am now speaking

—*The Centenarian's Story*

And I send these words to Paris with my love,

And I guess some *chansonniers* there will understand them

—*France*

To his work without flinching the *accoucheur* comes

—*Song of Myself*, 49

Many things to absorb I teach to help you become *élève* of mine

—*To a Western Boy*

"To a Foil'd European Révolutionnaire" is the title of a poem. Whitman speaks in "Song of Myself" (15) of the "jour printer," a term, perhaps, from his New Orleans days. Or it might be an abridgement of "journeyman printer." He uses two substantivated past participles. Compare *exalté* in his prose.

I say I see, my friends, if you do not, the illustrious *émigré*

—*Song of the Exposition*, 3

The wretched features of *ennuyés*, the white features of corpses

—*The Sleepers*

In the 1855 text of "Song of Myself" (32), Whitman used *amie* as masculine. Instead of substituting *ami*, he dropped the word in 1860. Earlier in the poem (22) he used the word without a following pronoun, masculine or feminine, and he retained it in this passage in succeeding editions.

Picking out here one that shall be my *amie*

Choosing to go with him on brotherly terms

—*Song of Myself*, 32 (1855)

Extoller of *amies* and those that sleep in each others' arms

—*Ibid.*, 22

Whitman sometimes uses French expressions in his apostrophes to persons or to personified abstractions. One is *ma femme*. He employed it more than once and never dropped or replaced it, far-fetched as it sounds in the contexts in which he uses it. Two others *mon enfant* and *mon cher*, he later dropped.

For you these from me, O Democracy, to serve you, *ma femme*!

For you, for you I am trilling these songs

—*For You O Democracy*

I will yet sing a song for you, *ma femme*

—*France, in the Eighteenth Year of These States*

Democracy! near at hand a throat is now inflating itself and joyfully singing *Ma femme*! for the brood beyond us and of us.

—*Starting from Paumanok*, 12

The last paragraph of the "Song of the Open Road" began in 1856—

*Mon enfant*, I give you my hand!

I give you my love more precious than money

In 1861 he substituted *camerado*, an old English form of the Spanish word, which he had from the Waverley novels. The ninth section of "Starting from Paumanok" read in 1860—

What do you seek so pensive and silent?

What do you need *camerado*?

*Mon cher* do you think it is love?

For *mon cher* Whitman substituted *dear son* in 1867. Thus two of his three French phrases of address he did not retain.

### III

Whitman's military words and place words may for convenience be grouped together. The military words derive probably from his experiences during the Civil War. Many of his poems, as "Bivouac

on a Mountain Side," "An Army Corps on the March," "Cavalry Crossing a Ford," arose from this experience, and it might well be expected to influence his diction. The list of words of this character is not long. In his prose are to be found—

"Only half a dozen individuals comprise his audience, and these half a dozen are Robert Funke and his *corps de réserve*." *New Orleans Daily Crescent*, March 13, 1848. "I am continually lost at the absence of blowing and blowers among these old-young American *militaires*." *Specimen Days*, Aug. 12, 1863. "Then with *sorties* in very 'many other directions." *Ibid.*, July 29, 1881. "In the second place the volume is a *sortie*—whether to prove triumphant and conquer its field of aim, etc." *A Backward Glance o'er Travel'd Roads*, Preface to *November Boughs*. 1888. "But we must make *reconnaissance* a little further still." *Poetry To-Day in America*.

Here or with the preceding group might be placed the *révolutionnaire* of "To a Foil'd European Révolutionnaire," the title of a poem of the "Autumn Rivulets" group. French words to be classed as military words in Whitman's poetry are *débouché*<sup>4</sup> and *reconnaissance* (compare *reconnaissance* in his prose). With these may be grouped a word from the hunt, *battues*.

On, on, and do your part, ye burying, ebbing tide!  
On for your time, ye furious *débouché*

—*Fancies at Navesink*

And that the enclosing purport of us here is not a speculation or bon-mot  
or *reconnaissance*

—*A Song for Occupations*, 3

Was not so desperate at the *battues* of death—was not so shock'd at the  
repeated fusilades of the guns.

—*France*

Whitman's place-words are of miscellaneous type, some nouns, some verbs, some concrete words, some abstract. The group is not very organic, and it does not involve many examples. All are words in familiar current usage. A few appear in his prose.

". . . in the city of Bordeaux or in some of the *faubourgs* thereof," Sketch of "Timothy Goujon," *New Orleans Daily Crescent*, April 4, 1848. ". . . in Washington among the great persons and their *entourage*," *Specimen Days*. "And so by *détour* around to the President's house," *Ibid.*, May 22, 1865. "None sees that the *locale* of American government must be permanently founded far West before many years," "Letter from Washington," *New York Times*, October 4, 1863.

<sup>4</sup> *Débouch* is treated as an English word in "dim ages *debouching* westward" ("A Broadway Pageant" 3), "Countless masses *debouch* upon them" ("Starting from Paumanok" 2), "We *debouch* upon a newer, mightier, varied world ("Pioneers, O Pioneers!").

Two words for which Whitman has poetical fondness are *trottoir* and *rendezvous*.

*Trottoirs* throng'd, vehicles, Broadway, the women, the shops and shows,  
—*Manahatta*

Give me faces and streets—give me these phantoms incessant and endless  
along the *trottoirs*!

—*Give Me the Splendid Silent Sun*

You prostitutes flaunting over the *trottoirs*

—*You Felons on Trial in Courts*

A little sustenance, a hut and garden, a little money, as I *rendezvous* with  
my poems

—*To Rich Givers*

My *rendezvous* is appointed, it is certain

—*Song of Myself*, 45

Making directly for this *rendezvous*, vigorously clearing a path for herself,  
striding through the confusion

—*Song of the Exposition*, 3

Other words that may be grouped here are *atelier*, *route*, *détour*, *embouchure*. Two verbs deserve inclusion, in addition to the verbal use of *rendezvous* cited above from "To Rich Givers."

Ever the *ateliers*, the factories divine,  
Issuing *eidolons*,

—*Eidolons*

In spiral *routes* by long *détours*

—*Song of the Universal*

I blow through my *embouchures* my loudest and gayest for them

—*Song of Myself*, 18

Making your rivers, lakes, bays, *embouchure* in him

—*By Blue Ontario's Shore*, 6

*Cache* and *cache* again deep in the ground and sea, and where it is neither  
ground nor sea.

—*The Sleepers*, I

#### IV

A large number of the French words used by Whitman may be termed, for want of a better group name for them, social words. Most were and are in familiar current usage. It is somewhat surprising to find them in the pages of a writer who made so much of rejecting parlor language and who cared nothing for the "elegant" and the aristocratic. Yet there is no mistaking the poet's partiality for such borrowings. They play a conspicuous rôle alongside his slang and his parade of scientific and philosophical terms. When a reader has once surrendered to Whitman's catholicity of



diction, his polyglot importations, whatever their character, hardly seem affected or out of place.

Most of the French social locutions used in Whitman's prose came from his early newspaper days in New Orleans.

"And made my first *début* amidst the chivalry, beauty, loveliness and exquisite grace congregated in that social hall." From "A Night at the Terpsichore Ball," in the New Orleans *Daily Crescent*, May 18, 1848. ". . . and you cannot fail to notice him as remarkably *distingué* in his air and appearance," sketch of "John J. Jinglebrain" in the *Daily Crescent*, March 28, 1848. ". . . she retails bad coffee at a picayune the cup, with an air of *nonchalance* entirely suited to the calling and to the customers." From "Miss Dusky Grisette," New Orleans *Daily Crescent*, March 16, 1848. ". . . a beautiful enameled, filagree, inlaid *morceau* of *bijouterie*, whose value intrinsically, *per se*, was perhaps about six bits." From "Samuel Sensitive," New Orleans *Daily Crescent* May 2, 1848. ". . . the perfect rectitude and *insouciance* of the movements of animals." Preface to *Leaves of Grass*, 1855. ". . . these grace-persuading *recherché* influences," *Poetry To-Day in America*. ". . . and the central unornamented *cortège* as it trots toward Lafayette Square arouses no sensation," *Specimen Days*, August 12, 1863. "And I can realize in it the culmination of something better than any stereotyped *éclat* of history or poems." *Democratic Vistas*. ". . . its *personnel* of lords and queens and courts, so well-dressed and so handsome." ". . . far surpassing all the vaunted samples of book-heroes, or any *haut ton coteries*." "to stand before presidents or generals, or in any distinguished collection with *aplomb*." ". . . desperate revolt at the close of a life without elevation or *naïveté*." *Ibid*.

"Au Revoir" appeared as a heading for an unpublished article entitled "A Visit to the Opera."

Many French words to be classed as social words are to be found in Whitman's poetry. Although they seem out of place when the reader first comes upon them, they are usually attractive in sound; their significance is clear even to those who are not students of French; and they convey exactly the meaning the poet wished. He is especially fond of *délicatesse*.

To fuse within themselves its rules precise and *délicatesse*?

—*Spirit that Formed This Scene*

For the roughness of the earth and of man encloses as much as the *délicatesse* of the earth and of man

—*Song of the Broad-Axe, 4*

Not youth pertains to me,

Nor *délicatesse* . . . I cannot beguile the time with talk

—*Not Youth Pertains to Me*

Fear grace, elegance, civilization, *délicatesse*

—*By Blue Ontario's Shore, 4*

Other words of this character which Whitman likes appear in the following passages. They are used in various ways.

Nor to converse with learn'd persons, or bear my share in the *soirée* or feast  
—*City of Orgies*

I saw the rich ladies in full dress at the *soirée*

—*Faces*

In the satisfaction and *aplomb* of animals,  
In the annual return of the seasons

—*Song at Sunset*

No fumes, no *ennui*, no more complaints or scornful criticisms

—*Song of Joys*

You broken resolutions, you racking angers, you smother'd *ennuis*

—*Ah Poverties, Wincings, and Sullen Retreats*

Ungracious glooms, aches, lethargy, constipation, whimpering *ennui*

May filter in my daily songs.

—*As I Sit Writing Here*

Behavior lawless as snow-flakes, words simple as grass, uncomb'd head,  
laughter and *naïveté*

—*Song of Myself, 39*

The light and shade, the curious sense of body and identity, the greed that  
with perfect *complaisance* devours all things.

—*A Song for Occupations, 3*

I see the hiding of *douceurs*, I see nimble ghosts whichever way I look

—*The Sleepers*

To mount the scaffold, to advance to the muzzles of guns with perfect  
*nonchalance*

To be indeed a God!

—*A Song of Joys*

In the learn'd *coterie* sitting constrain'd and still, for learning inures  
not to me,

—*Not Youth Pertains to Me*

All around me I hear that *éclat* of the world

—*As I Walk These Broad Majestic Days*

To these nouns a few adjectives are to be added—none unusual  
unless as regards the context in which the poet introduces them.

Me imperturbe, standing at ease in nature,

Master or mistress of all, *aplomb* in the midst of irrational things

—*Me Imperturbe*

We are those two natural and *nonchalant* persons

—*Behold this Swarthy Face*

No sweetness *debonair*<sup>5</sup> of tearful harp or glib piano thine

—*To a Locomotive in Winter*

<sup>5</sup> French *débonnaire*. Perhaps Whitman's adjective was not a French word to him.

## V

A final class of French words appearing in Whitman's pages includes literary and miscellaneous words not belonging in preceding groups, as *rondure* (if this is the French *rondeur*), *rapport*, *éclaircissement*, *dénouement*. Words of many types are included, for convenience, in this group. Like most of his foreign words they are clear in meaning and attractive in sound, and they contribute a distinctive element to his poetical dialect. It would be futile to inquire into his sources for them, although these sources are more likely, on the whole, to have been written than oral. The exhibit of literary and miscellaneous words from his prose is as follows. A few terms come from his newspaper days in New Orleans. Many are from his prefaces and essays. He never lost his liking for employing them.

"Out of their *arrière* and darkness." Preface, 1888. *A Backward Glance o'er Travel'd Roads*. "Out of these *arrière*s of persons and scenes I was born." *Specimen Days*. "The western star, Venus . . . as if it held *rapport* indulgent with humanity." *Ibid.*, March 4, 1865. "There is surely at present an inexplicable *rapport* . . . between that deceas'd author and our United States of America." *Ibid.*, February 10, 1881. ". . . embodied in the present *mélange* partly as my contribution and outpouring." Preface, 1876. "A *mélange* of loafing, looking, hobbling, sitting, travelling." *Specimen Days*, August 20, 1890. ". . . to take part in the great *mêlée*, both for victory's prize itself and to do some good." *A Backward Glance o'er Travel'd Roads*, 1888. "Perhaps the best of my songs heard . . . is the *résumé* of them." *Ibid.* "Perhaps the main, the high *façade* of all." *Democratic Vistas*. "The *embonpoint* of her form is full of attraction, and she dresses with simple neatness and taste." Sketch of "Miss Dusky Grisette," *New Orleans Daily Crescent*, March 16, 1848. ". . . gathering, closing up toward some long-prepared most tremendous *dénouement*." Preface, 1872. "Ever Columbus-like, sailing out for New Worlds, and to complete the orb's *rondure*." *Notes Left Over*. ". . . love-making, *éclaircissements*, proposals." *Specimen Days*.

*Rondure*, *éclaircissement*, and *feuillage* are favorite words in Whitman's poetry. At the risk of monotony, a rather full (but by no means exhaustive) display of certain especially recurrent French words is included. Some examples, from the many illustrative lines which might be cited, are these—

Thou *rondure* of the world at last accomplish'd

—*Passage to India*, 4

O vast *Rondure* swimming in space

—*Passage to India*, 5

Behold the great *rondure*, the cohesion of all

—*Out of the Rolling Ocean*

Our own *rondure*, the current globe, I bring

—*Song of the Exposition*, 7

The tangl'd long-deferr'd *éclaircissement* of human life

—*A Thought of Columbus*

A strange *éclaircissement* of all the masses past, the eastern world, the ancient, mediaeval.

—*On, On the Same, Ye Jocund Twain*

Of what the *feuillage* of America is the preparation for—and of what all sights, North, South. East, West, are

—*Thoughts*, 2

O *feuillage*! O North! O the slope drained by the Mexican Sea!

—*Apostroph*, 1860. Dropped, 1867

Always our old *feuillage*! . . .

These affording in all their particulars, the old *feuillage* to me and to America . . .

How can I but as here chanting, invite you for yourself to collect bouquets of the incomparable *feuillage* of these States?

—*Our Old Feuillage*

Other favorite words are *ensemble*, *rapport*, *résumé*, *débris*. Whitman's liking for *ensemble* may derive from his enthusiasm for operatic and orchestral music.

I will not make poems with reference to parts,

But I will make poems, songs, thoughts with reference to *ensemble*.

—*Starting from Paumanok*, 12

All must have reference to the *ensemble* of the world, and the compact truth of the world.

—*Laws for Creations*

I think some divine *rapport* has equalized me with them.

—*Salut au Monde*, 13

By sailors young and old haply will I, a reminiscence of the land be read  
In full *rapport* at last.

—*In Cabin'd Ships at Sea*

A carol closing sixty-nine—a *résumé*—a repetition

—*A Carol Closing Sixty-Nine*

Earth's *résumé* entire floats on thy keel, O ship

—*Thou Mother with Thy Equal Brood*, 4

Out of that old entire European *débris*, the shatter'd mummeries

—*Spain*, 1873-74

Amid lanes and through old woods, where lately the violets peep'd from  
the ground, spotting the gray *débris*.

—*When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*

*Mélange* mine own, the unseen and the seen,

—*Starting from Paumanok*

Do you see no further than this *façade*, this smooth and tolerant manner of me?

—*Are You the New Person Drawn Toward Me?*

*Allons* from all *formules*!

From your *formules*, O bat-eyed and materialistic priests.

—*Song of the Open Road*, 10

Among Whitman's French adjectives an outstanding favorite is *rapport*, cited already in noun usage. He makes liberal use of it in both prose and verse. Once he employs the French present participle *riant*.

"One must . . . get *rapport* with this people and country." *Specimen Days*, September 25, 1879. "The luxury of *riant* grass." *Ibid.*, July 2, 1882. "Of ornaments to a work nothing *outré* can be allowed." *Democratic Vistas*.

Here are selected instances of miscellaneous French adjectives from his poetry.

All comes by the body, only health puts you *rapport* with the universe

—*By Blue Ontario's Shore*, 3

To put *rapport* the mountains and rocks and streams

—*As They Draw to a Close*

Compassionaters, perceivers, *rapport* of men

—*To Him that Was Crucified*

*Exalté*, rapt, ecstatic,

The visible but their womb of birth,

—*Eidolons*

I believe the main purport of these States is to found a superb friendship, *exalté*, previously unknown,

—*To the East and to the West*

I say for ornaments nothing *outré* can be allowed

—*Rejected Poems*

Here is adhesiveness, it is not previously fashion'd, it is *apropos*

—*Song of the Open Road*, 6

How plenteous, how spiritual, how *résumé*

—*Night on the Prairies*

A few verbs may be added. In general Whitman uses verbs from foreign languages rather infrequently.

*Vive*, the attack—the perennial assault! *Vive*, the unpopular cause—

—*Democratic Vistas*

*Accouche!* *accouchez!*

Will you rot your own fruit in yourself there?

—*A Song of the Rolling Earth*

Passage O soul to India!

*Eclaircise* the myths Asiatic, the primitive fable,

—*Passage to India*, 2

## VI

Finally to be noted are a number of French phrases (like *haut ton*, *sang froid*, *carte de visite*, *marchand de fleurs*), in addition to those which have been cited already. Many appear in Whitman's prose, especially in his sketches for the New Orleans *Daily Crescent*. They are the usual stock French phrases in popular currency, unless in *arrière*, which he especially likes. His fondness for *arrière* in noun usage has already been illustrated (V). In his poetry Whitman uses the single French word oftener than the French phrase. Examples of phrases from his prose are—

"... the inanimate quadrupeds which lay piled up with so much *sang froid* in his boat beside him." Sketch of "Timothy Goujon" in the New Orleans *Daily Crescent*, April 4, 1848. "Adieu, Goujon, sell your oysters and pocket your small gains, and live quietly and comfortably, *chaqu'un à son gré*." *Ibid*. "We refer to a certain graceless *sans culottes* "—no, not *sans culottes*, either, literally, for that would be 'most senseless and fit.'" *Ibid*. "Peter . . . has exchanged his cloth cloak and cap for a blanket coat and *chapeau blanc*, and his whiskers have shared the fate of the 'last rose of summer.'" From "Peter Funk," New Orleans *Daily Crescent*, March 13, 1848. "Mademoiselle Grisette was 'raised' in the city, and is pretty well known as a very pretty *marchande des fleurs*." From "Miss Dusky Grisette," New Orleans *Daily Crescent*, March 16, 1848. "... in changing *tout à fait* her set of customers." *Ibid*. "As such she looks in character as a *jolie grisette*, as she is." *Ibid*. "Truly this particular sort of charm is not in full blossom here; *n'importe*." Letter from Washington, 1863, in the New York *Times*, October 3. "If incomplete here and superfluous there, *n'importe*." Preface to *As a Strong Bird on Pinions Free*, 1873. "I look upon Leaves of Grass . . . as my definitive *carte de visite* to the coming generation of the New World." Preface, *A Backward Glance o'er Travel'd Roads*, 1888. "Unerringly tending and flowing toward the permanent *utile* and *morale*, as rivers to oceans." *Specimen Days*, February 10, 1881. "He is assassinated—but the Union is not assassinated—*ça ira*." *Ibid*. "... preparing to build but most of them *en passant*—a fortnight, a month in these parts and then away." *Ibid*., April 26, 1879. "From several I had *carte blanche*. Many were entire strangers." *Ibid*., October 24, 1864. "All the vaunted samples of book-heroes, or any *haut-ton coteries*; in all the records of the world." *Democratic Vistas*.

Examples of French phrases from the pages of Whitman's poetry need less space for illustration. Favorites are *en masse* and *chef d'œuvre*. His prose liking for *in arrière* has already been illustrated. This citation of recurrent phrases closes an exhibit which, by this time, may well have become monotonous.

\* Whitman was a reader of Carlyle's *French Revolution*. This may have been the source for *sans culottes* and other of his French expressions.

See, in *arrière*, the wigwam, the trail

—*Starting from Paumanok*, 18

Of vista—Suppose some sight in *arrière* through the formative chaos

—*Thoughts*

I speak the word of the modern, the word *En-Masse*

—*Small the Theme of My Chant*

One's-Self I Sing, a simple separate person,

Yet utter the word Democratic, the word *En-Masse*

—*One's Self I Sing*

Or hotels of granite and iron? or any *chef-d'oeuvres* of engineering,

—*Song of the Broad-Axe*

And the tree-toad is a *chef-d'oeuvre* of the highest.

—*Song of Myself*, 31

## VII

The preceding lists contain all, or practically all, the French words which Whitman introduced in his various types of writing. No effort has been made at completeness in the citation of examples; but the words that he knows best and likes best—all his characteristic borrowings from the French—are entered and illustrated. The aim has been to display in inventory fashion the French element on which he relied. The exhaustive citation of the occurrences of individual terms would be doubtfully profitable. It is of less interest to determine the number of times a certain French word appears in his pages than to examine the general character of the words he employs and to note how he employs them and in what contexts.

For a poet who could read no foreign languages and who missed the orthodox academic training, Whitman had unusual linguistic consciousness. He was interested in the vernacular and an admirer of it.<sup>7</sup> In the first issue of *Leaves of Grass* he pays it this tribute—

The English language befriends the grand American expression—it is brawny enough, and limber enough and full enough. On the tough stock of a race who through all change of circumstance was never without the idea of political liberty, it has attracted the terms of daintier and gayer and subtler and more elegant tongues. It is the powerful language of resistance—it is the dialect of common sense. It is the speech of the proud and melancholy races, and of all who aspire. It is the chosen tongue to express growth, faith, self-esteem, freedom, justice, equality, friendliness, amplitude, prudence, decision, and courage. It is the medium that shall wellnigh express the inexpressible.

<sup>7</sup> See also his "Slang in America," *North American Review*, November, 1885.

Whitman's admiration for the English language and his rejection of things European did not hinder him from being one of the most liberal employers of foreign words among our men of letters. The exhibit of loan-words in the preceding pages is a large one. Add to those from the French Whitman's importations from Italian, Spanish, Latin, and Greek, and the array of his Old World borrowings becomes impressive. His expression is by no means the most important element in his work. It remains, as he wished it to be, subordinate to his gospel. But it is a distinctive element. Very different would be the total effect of his poetry had he modified his colloquial vocabulary and omitted his curious polyglot borrowings.

*1925*



## THE DIALECT OF COOPER'S LEATHER-STOCKING

The speech of James Fenimore Cooper's frontiersman, Nathaniel Bumppo, he of the sobriquets Leather-Stocking, Deerslayer, Hawkeye, Pathfinder, La Longue Carabine, is far from being the most important feature of his characterization. Yet it has no little interest for present-day students of speech, an interest that is partly historic and partly intrinsic. Leather-Stocking has taken his place among the classic characters of the world. He belong alongside Don Quixote and Gil Blas in European literature and Robinson Crusoe and Lemuel Gulliver, Parson Adams and Dr. Primrose, Mr. Pickwick and Sir Willoughby Patterne in British literature. With Rip Van Winkle and Uncle Tom he begins the list of unforgettable characters for American literature. It is possible that future generations will place next on the roll of permanent heroes of our fiction George F. Babbitt, the realtor, who is perhaps as characteristic of our period as the frontiersman was of Cooper's. It is not unthinkable that in the twenty-first century those interested in linguistic retrospection may seek to analyse the speech of Sinclair Lewis's business man much as we examine the speech of Leather-Stocking; partly because of the historic place of the book and partly because it reflects some features of our speech selected by the writer as characteristic.

Cooper explains in the preface to the *Leather-Stocking Tales*, prefixed to the *Deerslayer* in 1841, that there is not perfect harmony or consistency between the tales because of their fortuitous manner

of composition. In the order of their production Cooper wrote the *Pioneers* (1823), the *Last of the Mohicans* (1826), the *Prairie* (1827), the *Pathfinder* (1840), and the *Deerslayer* (1841). Thus there were eighteen years between the first volume and the last. In the *Pioneers*, the *Last of the Mohicans*, and the *Pathfinder*, Cooper's hero is in his prime. In the *Prairie*, the third to be written, he is an old man. In the *Deerslayer*, written last, he is in his youth. The order in which the stories belong as recounting the life of their hero is the alphabetical order, the *Deerslayer*, the *Last of the Mohicans*, the *Pathfinder*, the *Pioneers*, and the *Prairie*. Tennyson sought in much the same manner to bring unity to the *Idylls of the King* long after he had launched them independently. Cooper, on the whole, is as successful as Tennyson in his late attempt to achieve unity.

When Cooper brought forward his frontiersman in the *Pioneers* (1823) he told us little or nothing of his past life. We know that he was of white parentage, "a man without a cross," and was brought up among the Delaware Indians. Was he of English, Scotch, or Irish progenitors? Probably he was of English stock although we are not told this specifically. In the preface of the *Deerslayer* Cooper says of his hero: "He was removed from everyday inducements to err which abound in civilized life while he retains the best and simplest of his early impressions." Cooper is often said to have had the life of Daniel Boone partly in mind when he created his character;<sup>1</sup> but his idea of the unsocial Leather-Stocking, shunning the haunts of men, displaying more zest for the companionship of savages in the woods than for civilized man, plainly emerges from the post-Rousseau dissatisfaction with civilization and sublimation of voluntary social exile which characterized European and American literature of more than a hundred years ago. Tired of hearing of nature only when refined and artificialized by man, tired of hearing of man only when tamed by society and civilization, the public transferred its interest to nature in her primitive aspects and to human beings in their most independent, solitary, and protesting attitudes. Cooper has his Bumpo wax enthusiastic over nature's wonders in the best manner of the Words-

<sup>1</sup> See, however, the testimony of Susan Fenimore Cooper: "Natty Bumpo was entirely original with the exception of his *leathern stockings* which were worn by a very prosaic hunter by the name of Shipman who brought game to the Hall." *Correspondence of James Fenimore-Cooper*, I, 48. 1922.

worthian decades from which he derives. Leather-Stocking is capable of high flights of poetical eloquence when talking of nature, although before and after these passages he may speak as an illiterate. Consider the following, which is surely book speech rather than that of a woodsman:

" . . . The seasons come and go, Judith; and if we have winter with storms and frosts, and spring, with chills and leafless trees, we have summer, with its sun and glorious skies, and fall, with its fruits, and a garment thrown over the forest that no beauty of the town could rummage out of all the shops in America."

Or this passage from the *Last of The Mohicans*:

"It falls by no rule at all; sometimes it leaps, sometimes it tumbles; there it skips; here it shoots; in one place 'tis white as snow, and in another 'tis green as the grass; hereabouts it pitches into deep hollows that rumble and crush the 'arth; and thereaways it ripples and sings like a brook, fashioning whirlpools and gulleys in the old stone as if 'twas no harder than trodden clay . . . First it runs smoothly, as if meaning to go down the descent as things were ordered; then it angles about and faces the shores; nor are there places wanting where it looks backward, as if unwilling to leave the wilderness to mingle with the salt."

There are times also when Cooper's frontiersman becomes Ossianic. This passage from the *Prairie* is almost pure Ossian transferred to the American scene:

" . . . It is the fate of all things to ripen, and then to decay. The tree blossoms, and bears its fruit which falls, rots, withers, and even the seed is lost! Go count the rings of the oak and of the sycamore; they lie in circles, one about the other, until the eye is blinded in striving to make out their numbers; and yet a full change of the seasons comes round while the stem is winding one of these little lines about itself, like the buffalo changing his coat, or the buck his horns; and what does it all amount to? There does the noble tree fill its place in the forest, loftier and grander and richer, and more difficult to imitate than any of your pitiful pillars, for a thousand years, until the time which the Lord hath given it is full. Then come the winds, that you cannot see, to rive its bark, and the waters from the heavens, to soften its pores; and the rot, which all can feel and none can understand, to humble its pride and bring it to the ground. From that moment its beauty begins to perish. It lies another hundred years, a moldering log, and then a mound of moss and earth; a sad effigy of a human grave."

Passages like these and illiterate speeches may come from Leather-Stocking on the same page. It was this incongruity that led Mark Twain to remark that "when a personage talks like an illustrated, gilt-edged tree-calf, hand-tooled seven-dollar Friendship's Offering

in the beginning of a paragraph, he shall not talk like a negro minstrel at the end of it."

The example of Sir Walter Scott whose lower class characters use dialect as part of their "local color" was immediately behind Cooper in his handling, though the use of dialect in fiction was of course far older than Scott. Cooper is no such skilful employer of dialect as was his master. He handles it more or less amateurishly; but his results equal those of his contemporaries, and he does as well relatively with his dialect as with his book English. For poetry the florescence time of dialect writing lasted from the *Biglow Papers* through James Whitcomb Riley and Eugene Field. Toward the end of the century young poets wrote it and newspapers printed it much as, in these days, our popular writers are preoccupied with slang. But in prose the use of dialect was already established, and Cooper wrote it without introducing novelties or bringing in changed modes. He was no linguistic innovator like O. Henry or Ring W. Lardner. The illiterate speech of his lower class characters resembles that in the works of his contemporaries.

What were the stock marks of unlettered speech to the novelists and dramatists of the early nineteenth century? What devices did Cooper rely on? In these days we are accustomed to eccentric diction, in the illiterate or informal speech of our fiction, and to spellings showing word-liaison and slovenly pronunciation in general. An analysis of a present-day best-seller would reveal a liberal usage of slang expressions, the transient variations from the standard that rise in vogue, have their day, and are replaced by the new. Dialect on the other hand has permanence. Its users speak it seriously and unconsciously, not deliberately or flippantly. Cooper places dialect not slang in the mouths of his characters, while our contemporary fiction writers like both. Slang has taken on more and more importance. The heroes and heroines of Cooper's period may never speak it but it is relied upon by the most patrician characters of present-day popular writers.

The volume which Cooper wrote last, the *Deerslayer*, is that in which Leather-Stocking's speech is most heavily weighted with dialect. The *Prairie*, which he wrote while in Europe, has least dialect. The hero's language improved with age. He speaks by far the best English of his life when he has become an octogenarian! It is to be borne in mind, however, that in the *Deerslayer*, the frontiersman has the central rôle. He nearly monopolizes the conver-

sation in this book and hence Cooper gave his language greater attention. He is a minor character in the *Pioneers* and on the whole is subordinated in the *Pathfinder*. That Cooper was in Europe when he wrote the *Prairie* probably accounts for the more bookish character of his speech in this tale.

Cooper's divergences from standard English may come from first-hand memories of characters known in his childhood at Coopers-town, or from his reading. Very likely they come from an amalgam of experience and reading, with possibly a little invention here and there. Bumpo's speech is not to be looked on as specifically New York speech. Dialect of much the same type comes from the mouths of New England characters and from the pens of other authors.

An analysis of the dialect of Leather-Stocking reveals the following as its leading features.<sup>2</sup>

## SOUNDS

### *Vowels*

Non-standard pronunciation plays a larger rôle in Leather-Stocking's dialect than breaches of grammar or misuses of words. The lapses from the standard are not uniform in the five books of the series but interest in pronunciation maintains a chief place in all. Especially, Bumpo's faults of speech belong in the category of archaisms. As already remarked, they are much the same faults as those in other fiction of the time, when the speech of unlettered characters is to be reflected. Many are identical with those exhibited in Lowell's *Biglow Papers*. Moreover the same faults are exhibited by other characters in the Leather-Stocking Tales themselves. Deerslayer's dialect does not differ noticeably from that of Hurry Harry in the *Deerslayer* or from that of Ishmael Bush in the *Prairie*, or from that of characters in works outside the Leather-Stocking series.

Easily the most striking and frequent variation from the standard is the substitution of *ar* for *er*, *ir* (*sarmon*, *vartue*), that change

<sup>2</sup> Late or modernized editions often level out some of Cooper's peculiarities to conform with present usage, for example the apostrophe of *our'n*, *your'n*, *l'arned*, *fri'nd*, *'arth*, etc. Other authors used the apostrophe in this way as well as Cooper; Sylvester Judd's *Margaret* (1857) has *our'n*, etc.

The present paper is based mainly on the Otsego edition of Cooper's novels, with some consultation of first editions and of later popular editions.

which began in England toward the end of the fifteenth century and was completed in the next century. In the eighteenth century, as many documents testify, the educated usually have *er* and the uneducated *ar*. In the earlier nineteenth century the usage is relied upon as an indication of dialect, the *Biglow Papers* having, for example, *narves*, *varsed*, *vartue*. Instances of this substitution from the five tales of the Leather-Stocking series are:

*Pioneers*: sartin, sertain, sertainty, unsertain (but uncertain, i), l'arned, larn't, unl'arned, unl'arnt, l'arning, sarved, yarbs, sarpent, disarnable, intarpret, desarts, varmint, consarns, consarning, sarvice, parson (=person), s'arch, etarnity, 'arth.

*Last of the Mohicans*: sarpints, sarponents, disconsart, (disconcerts, viii, disconcerted, vi), divarsions, pervart, 'arth, prefarmert, varmint, vartue, l'arn, karnel, desarts, sertain (certain viii, circumvent v).

*Prairie*: varmint, (vermin, xxix), l'arning, unl'arns, 'arth, uns'archable, (but deserts, circumvent, circumventions, etc.).

*Pathfinder*: sertain, sart'in, sertainty, sertainly, unsertain, onsertainty, sarve, sarvice, sarvices, sarving, sarvent, marcy, marciess, prefar, prefars, prefarrer, 'arth, consarn, consarning, consarned, converse, l'arn, l'arns, l'arning, l'arnt, l'arned, and unl'arned, expart, tarms, sarcumvent, sarcumvented, sarcumventions, sarpent, starn, infarnals, pervarted, s'arch, s'arching, narves, narvous, resarve, presarve, obsarvent, obsarved, desarves, desarved, desarving, undesarvedly, parsecuted, sarcumstances, desarts, desarted.

*Deerslayer*: 'arth, 'arthly, 'arnestly, 'arly, 'arliest, 'arned, 'arnest, (airnest, xiv), consarting, disconsarts, consarn, consarns, consarned, consarnin', consarning, consarting, sarving, disparsed, varsed, parceive, sarcumvention, sarcumventions, sarcumvent, sarcumvents, sarcumvented, converse, conversing, univarsal (universal, xv), tarminate, tarmination, sarmons, sertain, sertainly, sertainty, onsertain (unsertain, xiii), unsertainly, sarcumstance, sarcumstances, tarms, tarmed, expart, expartest, arn'nd, infarnal, sarve, sarving, avart, avarse, avarsion, advarsities, larn, larned, larnt, alart, sarvices, larnin', larning, sarviceable, detarmined, marcy, marcifful, obsarvable, parceptible, desarter, desarves, desarved, desarving, intarpreted, vartue, vartues, obsarve, obsarved, pervarse, Sarpent, s'arch, prefar, parch, desarts, desarted, presarves, sartified, swarving, (eternal, xxvi, universal, xv).

Next in abundance are examples of the fluctuation between *e* and *i*, also a characteristic of uneducated speech in the later eighteenth century. Today we usually associate *i* for *e* with Irish English, but it once belonged to English speech generally. As often noted, Benjamin Franklin said *git* for *get*. The closer vowel appears most frequently in the *Deerslayer*, which was written last. In the *Prairie* it plays no rôle.

*Deerslayer*: fri'nd, fri'nds, fri'ndly (friendly, xxii), fri'ndship, ind (end, xxvi), indivors, ag'in, gin'rally, gin'rous, gin'ral, gin'rals, gin'ralizing, ginerosity, inimy, inimies, inimity, ricommend (as noun, v), riptyles, indivor, endivors, endivoring, chist, rijiment, invy, divilttries (deviltries, xxx), vinerable, ripresentatyve.

*Pathfinder*: rijiment, ind, endivors, riptyle, inimy, squinched, divilttry, (devil, xxiv), risolute, ginerous, befri'nded, ginirals, giniral, gin'ral, gin'rally, inimity, ag'in, ag'inst.

*Mohicans*: ag'in.

*Pioneers*: gin'rous, ag'in, ind, inimy, wilcome, squinch, sintence.

Another staple archaism of speech is the occurrence of the diphthong in *ride* (ai) for that in *voice* (ɔi). This was a standard pronunciation early in the eighteenth century but had receded into dialect usage by Cooper's time. In the *Prairie* and the *Last of the Mohicans* Leather-Stocking's speech is free from this mannerism.

*Deerslayer*: expl'ite, expl'ites, p'int, p'ints (point, xxii), disapp'intments, disapp'inted, app'inted, app'intment, v'ice, j'inc, rej'ice, rej'icing, empl'y, emplyment, enj'yed, enj'yment, ch'ice, reconn'itred.

*Pathfinder*: p'int, disapp'intments, disapp'inted.

*Pioneer*: 'intments.

There are also many examples of the vowel of *mate* (e:) for the vowel of *machine* (i:). This is another archaic pronunciation. We associate it today mainly with Irish speech. Cooper's Irish characters employ it more often than do his other characters, but the occurrence of the older vowel is no specific indication of Irish brogue. The three earlier books of the series show little reliance on this pronunciation.

*Pathfinder*: consait, consaited, overconsated, ra'al.

*Deerslayer*: consait, consaits, I consait (think) consaited, desait, desaits, ra'al, ra'ally, ra'alilty.

There are a few words in which the *a* sound of *father* appears where our present vowel is that of *law* (ɔ:).

*Pioneers*: fa'an, fa'ans. *Prairie*: fa'ans (young fawn, x, etc.).

*Pathfinder*: fa'n, fa'an, da'hter. *Deerslayer*: ta'ant, ta'anting, ta'antings, fa'an, ha'nt, ha'ants, va'ants.

Some individual words showing nonstandard pronunciation are—

we'pons (*Mohicans*, viii), 'ither (*Pioneers*. Not a recognized pronunciation till later), ende'vored (*Pathfinder*, vii), amboosh (*Deerslayer*), f'erceness (*Deerslayer*, xiv), and the fronted kear, kearful, kearless (*Pioneers*), skear (*Pioneers*, *Prairie*).

A stock mannerism in the *Deerslayer* is the use of *on-* for *un-*. Dickens and others make abundant use of this mannerism in the speech of their uneducated characters. It appears frequently in the *Pathfinder* but is not relied on in the earlier books, the *Pioneers* and the *Prairie*, and it is little used in the *Last of the Mohicans*.

*Deerslayer*: onequal, onjust, onfit, onsartin (but unsartin, xxiii, unsartainty, xvii), ondergo, onjustifiable, onreasonable, onbecoming, onexpected, onexpectedly, onlawful, ontimely, oncommon, ontrue, ondo, ongin'rous, onpossibility, onhuman, oncalculated, onthoughtful, onpleasant, onbeknown, oneasy, onless, onexpected, onaccountable, oncalled for, onmeaningly, onlikely, oncomprehensible, oncivilized, onequalled, onharmless (xiii), onfit, onknowingly, oncomely, onqualified, onmeaningly, onsteady, onknown, onskilful, uncommon and onequalled (xii). But unl'arned (xxiv), unhumanize (v).

*Pathfinder*: onwise, onbecoming, onreasonable, onpractysed, onsteady, onthoughtful, oncreditable. But uneasy (xix).

*Mohicans*: unlimited, oncommon. But unhuman act (xiv). *Pioneers*: unl'arned man, uncertain. *Prairies*: unl'arned hunter, uneasy, etc.

Retention of a secondary accent on the last syllable results in the preservation of length in that syllable for certain words now having a shortened vowel in the standard language. Cooper suggests this pronunciation to the eye by spelling them with a *y* which he often italicizes. He makes free use of this device in the *Pathfinder* and the *Deerslayer* but not in the three earlier books.

*Pathfinder*: actyve, natyve, riptyle, favoryte, practysed, onpractysed.

*Deerslayer*: captyve, captyves, actyve, instinctyve, riptyle, riptyles, practice, practyces, practyse (verb) natyve, captyvement, representatyve, cowardyce.

Among vowel changes, that most commonly exhibited is *syncope*. The following are staple instances—

*Deerslayer*: ingen'ous, nat'ral, partic'lar, frivol'ties, cur'ous, cur'osity, exper'ence, exper'enced, inexper'enced, ongin'rous, gin'rous, gin'ral, gin'rally, gin'ralizing, ven'son (but venison, xxv).

*Pathfinder*: gin'ral (giniral, viii), gin'rally, exper'ence, exper'enced, nat'ral, nat'rally, cur'osity. But particular, i, gin'erous, xviii.

*Pioneers*: gin'rous, cur'ous, consid'ring, posteerum (i).

The words *whosoever* and *howsoever* are contracted to *whosever* and *howsever* in the *Deerslayer*. A whole syllable, consonant as well as vowel, is omitted in Bumpo's *gran'ther* in his speeches to Middleton in the *Prairie*.

There are many instances of vowel *weakening*, especially of final syllables. Witness *Ontary*, *Pennsylvania*, *Virginny*, and *fever-an-agy* in the *Pioneers*. In the *Deerslayer* appears *valie* for value and *idee* with apocope of *-a* (idea, xiv). The *Prairie* has *thankee*, *harkee*.



Forms like *natur'*, *ventur'*, *creatur'* (*cretur*, *Pioneers*, i, *creature* also, i), *scriptur'*, *futur'*, *fortun'* are common in all five tales. Weakening of a middle syllable appears in *repitation* (*Deerslayer*), *edicate*, *edication*, *unedicated* (*Pathfinder*). The *Prairie* (xxii) has *education*.

Vowel glides appear occasionally. The forms *commerades* (*Mohicans*, xii) and *Patteroon* (*patroon*, *patron*, *Mohicans*, xiii) show glides; and glides or analogical vowels appear in *thataway*, (*Deerslayer*), *thisaway* (*Deerslayer*), *hereaway* (*Deerslayer*), *thereaways* (*Mohicans*, vi).

### Consonants

Consonant changes involve fewer words and may be reviewed more quickly than vowel changes, for Cooper's series. Instances of added consonants are—

*Prosthesis*: t'other (*Pathfinder*, xxviii, *Deerslayer*, xxvi).

*Epenthesis*: lovyer (*Deerslayer*, ix), howsomever (*Pioneers*, *Prairie*), and instances of intrusive *r*, intermates (*Pathfinder*, ii) plauserble, conterplation (*Deerslayer*, xxvi), darter (*Deerslayer*, xii). Possibly the intrusive *r* of the last word is meant merely to indicate vowel quality, but compare da'hter (*Pathfinder*, xii).

*Epithesis*: varmint, gownd (*Deerslayer*).

Consonant *substitution* appears in a few words. *Injin* occurs regularly for Indian in the *Deerslayer* but in other books (*Pioneers*, xvi, etc.; *Prairie*, v, etc.), Leather-Stocking pronounces the word in the usual way. The *Last of the Mohicans* has *handkercher* for handkerchief. Dental *n* for back *n* (*ng*) appears in many words throughout the series.

Consonant *loss* (of *w*, *f*, *r*, *l*, *s*, *d*) appears in a few instances.

trainin', cléarin', longin's, feelin's, comin', cunnin'est, meetin', etc.

backard (*Deerslayer*), a'ter, a'terwards, a'ternoon (*Deerslayer*), gal (*Pathfinder*, *Deerslayer*), galish, soger, sogers, sogerizing (*Pathfinder*, xiii), sin' (*Pioneers*, etc.).

extrornary (*Pioneers*, xvi), "This is an extr'ornary garment, too; and extr'ornary things get up exta'ornary feelin's (*Deerslayer*, xii).

### GRAMMATICAL FORMS

For nouns may be noted the occurrence of many *nomina agentis* now unfamiliar. In the *Prairie* all the characters use the plural *Siouxes*, doubtless then the current plural. *Frenchers* appears in the *Prairie* and in the *Last of the Mohicans*, *Welshers* in the *Prairie* and *Dutchers* in the *Last of the Mohicans* and the *Pioneers*. The

*Pathfinder* has *ignoranters* (iii), the *Prairie linguisters* and *admirators* and the *Last of the Mohicans admirators* (vi), *physicianer*, and *musicianer*. Not all these forms would count as dialectal in Cooper's day. *Physicianer* is not entered in the *Oxford Dictionary*, nor *ignoranter*. Its quotations show that *linguister* and *musicianer* had contemporary currency and that *admirator* was obsolete or rare. Of somewhat different character are *non-composser* (*Mohicans*, xvii) and a *non-plusser* (*Deerslayer*, xxv).

The plural *pair*, "three pair of moccasins" (*Mohicans*, xxi) persists in present dialect speech.

For *pronouns* the usage of *ye* for *you* and of the possessives *their'n*, *our'n*, *his'n*, *your'n* (present-day editors omit the apostrophe) and of *them* as a demonstrative are frequent. There is much confusion of the nominative and the accusative.

*ye* (*Pioneers*, xxx, xli, etc. Used to a dog, *Pioneers*, xxx, *Prairie*, etc.). *your'n* (*Pioneers*). But *yours* (*Pathfinder*, xxix). *our'n* (*Pioneers*, *Pathfinder*). *their'n* (*Pathfinder*). *his'n* (*Deerslayer*, etc.).

"them troops," "them knaves the Sioux," "Among them hills," (*Prairie*), "them hills" (*Pioneers*), "them regions," "them islands," "them miscreants," "them matters," "them rapids" (*Pathfinder*), "them riptyles," "them sort of feelin's," "them echoes," "them elephants," "them clouds" (*Deerslayer*), "that there gownd" (*Deerslayer*, xii).

"they was all them Yaqua Indians," "there's them living" (*Pioneers*), "there are them in the camp" (*Mohicans*), "there's them, etc." (*Deerslayer*), "them that live in the settlements" (*Pathfinder*).

Certain dialectal prepositions and adverbs are used pretty consistently in the series. Instances are too numerous to deserve individual citation. The archaic *afore*, *atween*, *atwixt* appear often with occasional *before's* and *between's* interspersed. *Ag'in* abounds, and *a'ter* for after; *a'terwards*, *a'ternoon* appear in the *Deerslayer*. Leather-Stocking uses the adverb *easierly* (*Deerslayer*, xxv) and remarks to Judith, "You're wonderful handsome," (xxiv). In the *Pioneers* (i) he refers to "thirty years ago," and uses "topsyturvylike." The prepositional phrase "at othersome" occurs in the *Last of the Mohicans* (vi) and "watch anights" in the *Pioneers* (i).

Wrong verbal usages are the least obsolete among the marks of dialect in Leather-Stocking's speech, especially the employment of analogical principal parts. Some of these wrong usages, notably the confusion of the preterite and the past participle, yet persist. The *Pioneers* and the *Last of the Mohicans* make much use of the archaic *'tis*, *'twas*, *'twouldn't*. Another archaism is *be* for *are*: "where

be ye?", "you be," "we be," etc. *Used to could* occurs in the *Pioneers* (xli) and the *Pathfinder* (xxix), and *lay for lie* in the *Pioneers* (xxvi) and the *Pathfinder* (iv). *Ain't* appears occasionally. An interesting verb usage is exhibited in Deerslayer's "rendezvous'd an app'ntment" (viii), "to rende-vous a fri'nd (v).

*Pioneers*: "you was," "times is," "I doesn't," "them that hasn't l'arning."

*Deerslayer*: "Our ways doesn't agree," "things doesn't," "you was," "your answers doesn't," etc.

*Pioneers*: druv, fou't, knowed, seed, catched, drawed, mought, teached.  
*Mohicans*: bursted, fou't, knowed, come (came). *Pathfinder*: knowed, know'd, druv, fi't. fou't.

### VOCABULARY

A few matters of vocabulary deserve mention. A glossary of Leather-Stocking's unusual or unfamiliar words, dialect terms, archaisms, or coinages, might seem brief when set over against one from some analogous series of tales of the present day. On the whole his vocabulary is narrow and hard-worked rather than rich and varied. In addition to the words or forms involved in preceding entries, certain others should be taken into account. A majority are adjectival.

atomy (*Pioneers*, xiii), trampooses (*Pathfinder*, viii), ambushment (*Mohicans*, v), younker (*Mohicans*, xiii), exaltification (*Deerslayer*, xii), horrifications (*Prairie*, xxiv), "Isn't he a queerity?" (*Pathfinder*, ii).

afcard (*Deerslayer*, *Pathfinder*), timmersome (*Deerslayer*), untimmersome (*Pathfinder*), frighty, gaunty, twisty, wasty (*Pioneers*), oversightful (*Deerslayer*, vii), disremembering, judgmatical (*Mohicans*), (adverb judgmatically, *Pathfinder*), adrye (*Pioneers*), skeary (*Deerslayer*), composs (*Deerslayer*), despisable (*Mohicans*), opinionated (biassed, *Deerslayer*), misfortunate (*Pathfinder* i), misfortunate (*Pathfinder*, xxvii, *Deerslayer*, xxx), gallantifying (*Deerslayer*, ii).

captivate (capture), untaught, (*Deerslayer*), "my eyes never a-weary" (*Deerslayer*, ii), musickate (*Mohicans*), horrified (made horrible, *Prairie*, xxiv), to make a man solemnize" (*Pioneers*, xxvi), "has never behappened me" (*Deerslayer*, iv).

One of Leather-Stocking's most annoying and hard-worked mannerisms is his use of the exclamation *Anan* when he does not understand or prefers not to understand. This is relied on throughout the series. *Ah's me!* is another of his persistent exclamations. His *harkee* and *thankee* are used by other characters in the series and in many other works of the period. *For why?* is one of his favorite questions.

Pleonasms in the speech of Leather-Stocking are "human man" (*Mohicans*) and "new beginner" (*Prairie*). Folk-etymological curiosities are "buck-and-near" (*Deerslayer*, xxiv), "my-hog-guinea chairs" (*Mohicans*, vi), "baggonet," "baggonet-men" (*Pioneers*, xiii). A comment in the *Deerslayer* (xxiv) is "That's a moral impossible." "I peppered the blackguards intrinsically like," he remarks in the *Pathfinder* (xxvii).

When Bumpo talks to the Indians and is supposed to be speaking in the Indian tongue, there is often no dialect in his English. In the *Prairie*, in which little dialect appears anyway, few faults of language are exhibited when he addresses the Pawnees. But there is little consistency. In the same book (i.e., *Deerslayer*), his speeches to the Indians may show dialect in one passage and literary or book English in another.

Leather-Stocking's terms of disparagement for the Indians show more variety and resourcefulness than might be expected from a speaker whose vocabulary in general is no large one. He calls them—

varmints (*Prairie*), riptyles (*Deerslayer*, etc.) imps (*Prairie*), varlets (*Mohicans*), devils (*Prairie*), knaves (*Mohicans*, *Prairie*), wily sarpints, infarnals (*Pathfinder*), vagabonds (*Mohicans*, *Deerslayer*), disremembering hounds (*Mohicans*), blackguards (*Pathfinder*).

His terms for women are the often-cited "females," "the gentles," "the pretty ones," etc. Readers find these monotonous.

In the *Last of the Mohicans*, hardly elsewhere, Cooper's frontiersman likes striking or poetical comparisons from nature—

". . . and like a rattler that has lost his fangs," ". . . screeching like a jay that has been winged," "like so many fettered hounds or hungry wolves," "brushing the dry leaves like a black snake," "much the same as one of you spurs a horse" ". . . losing moments that are as precious as the heart's blood to a stricken deer."

The citations in the preceding pages show the leading characteristics of Leather-Stocking's speech, but they are not exhaustive. To make them such would protract this paper, without corresponding increase in its interest or its value.

An excursion through the *Leather-Stocking Tales* with special attention to the speech of the characters shows plainly that Cooper's forte was not dialogue. His characters are tiresome talkers. They never forget their hobbies and they have a stock round of manner-

isms. Some writers of fiction are at their best when their dialogue is examined. Here Cooper is probably at his worst.

Leather-Stocking's type of dialect is by no means the only type in the Tales. The volume first written, the *Pioneers*, is on the whole that richest in the employment of dialect. In this book Monsieur LeQuoi speaks a Frenchman's broken English, Major Hartman, the "High Dutcher," speaks a German's broken English.<sup>3</sup> Betty Hollister speaks with Irish brogue, shown in spellings like "kape the coffee house," "lazy baste," "claning the kitchen," "convaniently," "p'aceably," or perhaps "Joodge" and "poomp." Judge Temple, when unconscious of his speech, lapses into Quaker idiom, chiefly the use of the pronoun *thee*. In other volumes of the series there is no attempt at representing foreign dialect for foreign characters are not introduced.

How out-of-date, on the whole, is Leather-Stocking's dialect now! We are no longer much interested in *-ar* for *-er*, as *sartain*, *larn*, for *certain*, *learn*. This archaic survival has mostly passed, and so in the main have pronunciations like *jine*, *pizen*. Of the marks of dialect reviewed, the non-concord of the subject and predicate and the formation of analogical preterites are those that are most persistent. We have our own round of lapses, and we go farther in the visual representation of non-standard speech than would have seemed possible or rational in Cooper's day. It has already been remarked that Cooper and Lowell often used the same details as marks of illiteracy. In the *Biglow Papers* as well as in the Leather-Stocking Tales appear *soger*, *yourn*, *airly*, *afollerin*, *gals*, *nateral*. Judd's *Margaret*, a New England novel printed in 1857, has *agin*, *nater*, *nateral*, *affeered*, *our'n*, etc. In these days, often without assuming that the speakers are illiterate—some are college men like Babbitt—we put into their mouths slang, dialect, intentional mispronunciations, and we experiment with approximations to phonetic writing. Leather-Stocking may employ archaic forms like *we'pon*, *sarpent*, *pizen*. Mostly we discard archaisms, but we still exhibit wrong noun and verb concord, use wrong pronominal forms, and like folk-etymological ventures. There appear in journalistic writing and popular fiction, so frequently that we hardly notice them, slang usages and verbal manipulations of all types.

\* These characters were taken from "actual colonists." See Susan Fenimore Cooper, *Correspondence of James Fenimore-Cooper*, I, 48. 1922.

Representations of rural dialect and of the dialect of foreigners remain but we also have served up to us the colloquialisms and jocosities of the business man. This is the special contribution of our period to dialect writing. Here are some random illustrations from authors like Sinclair Lewis, Thomas Beers, etc., and from the art titles of cartoonists. The latter are now a potent force in giving national circulation to new tag phrases and jocosities of speech.

"ittybitty tooth," "what chuh tryin' to do?" "jever hear one of his poems?", "you bettcha I wanta cuppa coffee," "a dollaranahaf," "I'm gonna go," "he musta been some guy," "a whaleuva favor," "S'nice, being baby-dolled," "ree-fined and elegant," "cripples and chee-ildren," "The lad is clev-vaw," "mahvellously," "How about lil'lunch's noon?" "Yuh. S'long." "Your manly buzzum," "That's presously the way I feel." "I'll get outta the room," "didja get it?" "willya look there?" "Went out kind of early, dincha?" "Awright."

Here are some typical sentences from a current newspaper.

"Get offa my foot before I knock you for a row of naughts." "Fer gosh sakes lemme outta the car, wilya, this here is my corner." "I did too pay my fare, ya big boloney." "Aw blow a tune, girlie. I got this seat first, and my dogs ache."

Cooper's dialect usages may be obsolete, but will our modes of exhibiting dialect wear so well as his? This seems doubtful. His departures from standard speech, being mostly archaisms, have more dignity than ours, and because of their greater simplicity and of the absence of slang and simplified spelling they are likely to remain longer intelligible.

## THE PLURALIZATION OF LATIN LOAN- WORDS IN PRESENT-DAY AMERICAN SPEECH

The tendency to rid the vernacular of foreign plurals by pluralizing loan-words according to the native method has operated since the entry of the first loan-words into the language. The foreign plural tends to be preserved only when, as in *indices* beside the regularized *indexes*, it has taken on differentiation of meaning. Many recently regularized plurals are now so well established that even the classical specialist uses them without self-consciousness. *Formulas*, a novelty when employed by Carlyle, now seems as standard as *formulae*, and *funguses* and *cactuses* as *fungi* and *cacti*. It is of interest to watch the process of regularization in the living speech and to record the new words to which it is extended. There is always zest in observing linguistic phenomena, especially in following the transformations which are taking place under our eyes, as it were. To both the linguistic student and the lexicographer it is of value to survey the creation of new forms and to try to help fix the chronology of their acceptance.

For the most part, the materials for the following short paper have been drawn from oral sources. In some instances printed forms from newspapers or periodicals have been cited. The words which are listed entered the language mainly in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. A few, like *fungus*, *emporium*, appeared

in written records in the sixteenth century, and a few others, like *curriculum*, first appeared in the nineteenth. The effort has been made to record and to group the new forms in a way that will exhibit the main tendencies in the popular treatment of Latin plurals. The habitual speaker of fair education has now little awe of classical loan-words. He rushes into whatever handling pleases him, without reluctance or thought or inquiry. No material has been drawn from British sources. It is possible, though not very probable, that British usage is more conservative than American in the regularizing of classical plurals.

### I. LATIN PLURALS USED AS SINGULARS

So firmly is -s established in the folk-mind as the normal plural ending that plurals which do not exhibit it seem to speakers to be singular. The following examples are not drawn from illiterate speakers but mainly from those having collegiate education. The usages are those of the fairly sophisticated. When these plurals used as singulars are themselves pluralized, the -s ending is added, as will be seen in another section.

1. The following plurals of Latin neuter nouns in -um are treated as singulars of the first declension feminine:

*curricula*—"The curricula of the institution is being altogether changed." Remark of a graduate student.

*data*—"Much data could be quoted as to the history of baseball in the University." "Such data is misleading." "This data is very significant." From articles for newspapers and pamphlets.

*dicta*—"This dicta, 'Go West,' is said to have come from Horace Greeley." Said by a platform speaker.

*emporia*—"There is a new clothing emporia on O street." Oral.

*insignia*—"That insignia is most attractive of all." "What is that insignia on his sleeve?" Said by onlookers at a procession.

*strata*—"This strata of the Latin loan-element in English comprises church words introduced by the coming of Roman missionaries." "This may be called the Renaissance strata of loan-words." From examination papers of graduate students.

2. The same tendency appears in a few words from the Greek. Like the preceding nouns from the Latin, they are given new plurals in -s by their users.

*criteria*—"That is no criteria as to the success of the course." Heard at an educational gathering.



*ganglia*—"The sensory nerve passes through a ganglia." From an examination paper.

*phenomena*—"What a strange phenomena." Oral.

3. In several instances the plurals of Latin masculines of the second declension appear as singulars.

*alumni*—"He is an alumni of the University of Indiana," writes a correspondent in the *Nebraska State Journal* of March 16, 1919. "As an alumni of the University of Nebraska, I shall surely be present at the semi-centennial" is a sentence from a letter. A slightly different usage, that has become standardized in expressions like "a golf links," "a water-works," appears in "I want to keep in touch with the U. of N. Yours for a united and enthusiastic alumni."<sup>1</sup> Letter to the *Alumni Journal* of the University of Nebraska, January, 1917.

*nuclei*—"This nuclei needs especial attention." "This nuclei contains chromatin." Written repeatedly in an examination paper. The writer used, several times, as the plural, the form *nuclei-i*.

*syllabi*—"First let me give you this syllabi and then this second syllabi." Spoken by a professor of education.

4. Reference may be made here to the new folk-etymological singular, *cosma*, from the Greek noun *cosmos*. It is of the same type as the folk-etymological singulars, *pea*, *burial*, *cherry*, etc., of the standard language.

*cosma*—"Pick a cosma." "What a beautiful cosma this is." "Mayn't I have this cosma?" The real singular, *cosmos*, then becomes plural: "Those are pretty cosmos."

Another new singular sometimes heard is

*gladiola* (accent on the second syllable)—"Let me see that gladiola." The plural is then *gladiolas*.

## II. CREATION OF DOUBLE PLURALS

The standard language has several plurals, vernacular and from the French, which are historically double plurals, as *quinces*, *invoices*, *kine*, *breeches*, and in dialect speech one sometimes hears *folkses*, *chilluns*, *childerns*, etc. Similarly double plurals are sometimes found among Latin loan-words.

1. There are several instances of the retention of the Latin neuter plural ending in *-a*, to which is added the vernacular plural sign *-s*.

<sup>1</sup> See "Some Plural-Singular Forms," *Dialect Notes*, IV (1913), 48-50.

*curriculas*—"I hope you will make a strong point of physical education in your curriculas." Speech of a football coach at a high-school convocation.

*insignias*—"Citizens ripped off the red insignias." *Lincoln* (Nebraska) *Evening News*, May 5, 1919.

*stratas*—"There are many stratas of the Latin loan-element in English." From an examination paper.

2. This tendency to create double plurals is especially marked in the treatment of masculine nouns of the Latin second declension. The Latin ending *-i* is retained in the plural, then *-s* added to *-i*.

*alumnis*—"Get out as many of the old alumnis as you can for the banquet." "There are many old alumnis in the city for Homecoming." Oral.

*bacillis*—"Don't drink water having typhoid bacillis when you are on that vacation." "Those fever bacillis are mighty dangerous." Oral.

*focis*—"There are various focis of infection." "Find the main focis of infection first thing." Heard in medical discussions.

*literatis*—"All the literatis of the burg will be there to meet the celebrity." Oral.

*narcissis*—"Narcissis for sale." From a florist's sign, 1919. No example of the singular "a narcissi" has come to my attention.

*stimulis*—"Now let us try these sense stimulis." "These stimulis have marked effect." Heard in the instructions given by student assistants in a psychological laboratory.

*syllabis*—"How many syllabis have I given out to you?" Question by a professor of education.

### III. CREATION OF *-s* PLURALS FROM LATIN SINGULARS

The addition of *-s* to the singular is the normal process in regularizing Latin plurals. Many plurals now standard have been created by it.

1. In the Latin first declension feminine, the same tendency which brought *formulas* beside *formulae*, and *amoebas* beside *amoebae*, brings:

*alumnas*—"Will many alumnas be back for the sorority banquet?" The shortened *alum*, feminine in application, never masculine, is heard in student usage. If universalized, this shortened form with its regularized plural, *alum*, *alums*, though it may not be "elegant," would do away with much confusion and many errors.

*antennas*—"The butterfly is said to have antennas." Student's usage.

*vertebras*—"What do you know of human vertebrae?" Student's usage.

2. In the second declension masculine, many new plurals like *funguses*, *radiuses*, *cactuses*, are now well established. *Ignoramus*, a verb form, not a noun of this declension, has *ignoramuses* as its

expected and proper plural, and so with *mandamus*. *Genuses* is standard in scientific usage beside *genera*, and *focuses* has long been good beside *foci*. *Parnassuses* may also be termed standard. New plurals, occasionally heard, of this type are:

*alumnuses*—"Which are alumnuses and which are not?" "Will many alumnuses be back on Homecoming Day?" Heard on a campus.

*narcissuses*—This has supplanted the *narcissi* of Shelley's "The Sensitive Plant," and is now the plural recognized in the dictionaries.

3. There is occasional regularization of the following fourth-declension noun, properly having the same plural as singular:

*apparatuses*—"What apparatuses shall I have to order?" Question asked by a student assistant in a laboratory. This plural appeared in written records in the nineteenth century, but it has made no great headway.

4. Regularized -s plurals of Latin neuter nouns, as *mediums* for *media*, are:

*curriculum*s—Adopted a few years ago by the National Education Association in place of *curricula*.

*emporiums*—"You'll find as many ready-to-wear things as you'll pay for in the garment emporiums along the main street." This is now the usual plural, in place of *emporia*, and, like *curriculum*s, does not count as dialectal.

Instead of *opera*, the neuter opus has occasionally for its plural:

*opuses*—"The opuses of American composers like MacDowell." Heard in a lecture.

5. Here may be added two Greek neuters which are assuming regularized plurals:

*criteria*s—"These are no true criterions of the success or failure of a man." From the speech of a professor. This plural was used in the eighteenth century, but it has not yet driven out *criteria*, perhaps because the word is infrequent in popular speech.

*phenomenons*—"I have heard of many strange phenomenons but of none stranger than that." A recognized plural in the nineteenth century, but rarely heard at the present time except in the phrase "infant phenomenons."

#### IV. NEW LATIN PLURALS

Transference of Latin nouns from one declension to another is not frequent; but a few examples are heard—apparently from those having some knowledge of the language and ambitious to speak it with precision.

*apparati*—"Set up your apparati." Heard in a chemical laboratory.

*rebi*—"Do you study the rebi in the Sunday Journal?" The nominative *rebus* is originally an oblique case, and both the standard *rebuses* and the occasionally heard *rebi* are interesting formations.

*Veni*—"Professor, which is your favorite among the Veni?" From a lecturer's anecdote of a young Cambridge lady, who made inquiry of her professorial cicerone, as they wandered among the de Milo's and de Medici's of a gallery.

## V. MISCELLANEOUS

Not germane to the subject of plurals but deserving record apropos of the treatment of classical loan-words in present usage, are the following forms:

*baccalaurium*—"Who gives the baccalaurium address?" Who is the speaker for our high school baccalaurium?" Heard several times in 1919.

*exit*—This third singular of a Latin verb established itself as an English noun long ago, and now the noun has become an English verb. It occurs as an infinitive, to *exit*, has the new third singular *exits*, as in "he exits," appears in the plural present, "they exit" (*exeunt* is unknown), has the preterite *exited*, and the participle *exiting*.

*fugit*—This third singular of a verb is now regularly conjugated, in jocular usage, in the one expression *tempus fugit*, "tempus is fugiting," "thus tempus fugited." Examples may be found in print.

*symporium*—"They expect to hold a symporium at the club Friday night." Used several times by a speaker. Probably a crossing of *symposium* and *emporium*.

1919

# FOLKLORISTIC

## THE TERM "COMMUNAL"

### I. THE DOCTRINE OF COMMUNAL ORIGINS

The period following the French Revolution was deeply interested in "the people" as a mass conception, in all that belonged to them and all that they created. It was in this period that theorists on the origin of law, customs, religion, language, literature—particularly the folk-song and the folk-tale—liked to advocate the doctrine of spontaneous, unconscious growth "from the heart of the people," as the phrase went. Such conceptions of origin had their critics from the first; but they remained more or less orthodox throughout the nineteenth century, and they still have foothold in both England and America. They have, however, receded in the wake of more reserved second-thoughts about human nature, along with the recession of the "romantic" vehemence, and of the Hegelian philosophy of the "over-soul," and of our own demagogic admiration of the undifferentiated demos.

In law, for a first illustration, the theory of the German jurist, Friedrich Karl van Savigny (1779–1861) remained entrenched pretty much throughout the century. Savigny's theory may be summarized in a few sentences:<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *System des heutigen römischen Rechts* (1840), I, § 7.

Yet we are not at all to think of it [the common law] as such in the sense that the several individuals who compose the people have produced it by an exercise of their will; for this will of the individuals might perhaps sometimes bring forth the same law but might also, perhaps, and with more likelihood bring forth very diverse laws. It is rather the spirit of the people [*Volksgeist*] living and working in all individuals that gives rise to the positive law; which, therefore is not a matter of chance for the consciousness of each individual but is necessarily one and the same law for each . . . This feeling [of the internal necessity which goes with the recognition of positive law] is expressed with most positiveness in the ancient assertion of a divine origin for law or for enactments; for one could not conceive of a more distinct denial that law originates by chance or through human will.

In other words, law is something that grows by sheer power of unfolding itself in men's miscegenated conscious states. About 1878 R. von Ihering attacked this doctrine with his theory of law as a conscious product of men seeking to achieve social ends, and Savigny's theory was gradually dropped in continental Europe. By the end of the nineteenth century, it was practically given up everywhere except in England and America.

A further illustration may be drawn from the history of theories concerning the origin and growth of language. Jacob Grimm thought of language as something born from the soul of primitive society. Savigny was Grimm's teacher, and as laws were to Savigny, so language was to Grimm, unmistakably of social emergence. His successors retained this view of language as a social product, though they offered explanations of the sources of human speech which were more concrete than Grimm's. A distinction, deriving from Grimm's view, arose between the "artificial" products of the individual and the spontaneous creation of the people. Professor Paul was a dissenter.<sup>2</sup> He emphasized the part played by the individual, and believed in an artistic rather than a social genesis for language. In the main, however, language continued to be viewed, as it was by the psychologist Wundt, as a product of the communal mind. Characteristic is the position of an American scholar, writing as late as 1891, in advocacy of "The Festal Origins of Human Speech." The psychologist, he says:<sup>3</sup>

. . . can trace the root back to the rhythmic sounds that savages produce when they beat sonorous bodies amid the play-excitement which originated through communal elation of the success of communal action, and which had become, at the earliest glimpse which we obtain of it, involved, like the oldest

<sup>2</sup> *Principien der Sprachgeschichte* (1886), ch. i.

<sup>3</sup> J. Donovan, *Mind*, vol. VI, pp. 498-506.

and most sacred of the words it gave birth to, in the race's traditional custom of festal celebration.

At the opposite extreme from these theories is the view of Professor Otto Jespersen. He suggests in his recently published *Language* (1922)<sup>4</sup> that:

[The first utterances were] exclamative, not communicative—that is, they came forth from an inner craving of the individual without any thought of any fellow creatures. Our remote ancestors had not the slightest notion that such a thing as communicating ideas and feelings to some one else was possible . . . Although we now regard the communication of thought as the main object of speaking, there is no reason for thinking that this has always been the case; it is perfectly possible that speech has developed from something which had no other purpose than that of exercising the muscles of the mouth and throat and of amusing oneself and others by the production of pleasant or possibly only strange sounds.

The first utterances of speech he fancies to himself as "something between the nightly love-lyrics of puss upon the tiles and the melodious love songs of the nightingale," i.e., he puts forward a doctrine which is neither "festal" nor "communal."<sup>5</sup> He also points out that to ensure the creation of a speech which shall be a parent to a new language stock, all that is needed is that two or more children should be placed by themselves in a condition where they will be entirely or to a large degree free from the presence or influence of their elders.<sup>6</sup> Professor Jespersen goes back to individuals. He does not rely upon the "mentally homogeneous throng," either for the origin of human utterance or for the creation of new language stocks.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> See pp. 432-442. See also his earlier *Progress in Language* (1894).

<sup>5</sup> Professor Jespersen is right, I think, in detaching primitive musical utterance from inevitable association with the dance. Edward Sapir (*Language*, 1921, p. 244) repeats—rather unthinkingly, I believe—the old view that "Poetry is everywhere inseparable in its origins from the singing voice and the measure of the dance." Poetry and song are inseparable in origins; but primitive musical utterance appears (like the songs of birds or of children) independent of the dance, as well as associated with it, as far down in the cultural scale as we can go.

<sup>6</sup> Following the American ethnologist Hale, "The Origin of Language," in *Transactions of the American Association for the Advancement of Science*, vol. xxxv, 1886, etc. See Jespersen's *Language*, p. 181.

<sup>7</sup> A parallel shift of theory may be seen in the fields of economics, anthropology, and sociology. For example, a belief prevailed, as advocated by Sir Henry Maine, E. de Laveleye, and other scholars, that the existing institution of private property is a direct descendant of a system of communal ownership—much as Professor Gummere thought individual authorship and ownership of song to be the direct descendant of communal authorship and ownership. A late reflection of Maine's

Alongside the early nineteenth century conceptions of the growth of law and language belongs Herder's collectivistic conception of the origin of popular poetry, which his disciple, F. A. Wolf, afterward applied to the Homeric poems. For literature, too, communal inspiration was advocated. The belief became orthodox that primitive peoples and other mentally homogeneous groups created their songs in public, in a sort of communal spontaneity. Just as for language, a distinction was insisted upon between "art" poetry, coming from the individual, and "folk" poetry, arising from the people. Among English dissenters, Joseph Jacobs remarked that there is no such thing as the folk behind what one calls folk tales, folk lore, popular ballads.<sup>8</sup> William Wells Newell, founder and first president of the American Folk-Lore Society was another dis-

view may be found in *The Evolution of Revolution*, by H. M. Hyndman (1921), who writes at the opening of his first chapter ("Primitive Communism"): "All authorities are agreed that, throughout the earlier development of mankind, communism, without any private property whatever in the means of creating wealth, prevailed as an economic and social order" . . . "Private ownership in any shape which gave its possessor economic or social power over his fellows, was unknown." Hyndman speaks in his introduction of "the most crucial revolution in the story of human growth" . . . "This revolution was the transformation from collective or communal property held by a portion of a tribe or gens, by the tribe itself, and ultimately by a confederation of tribes, into private property held by the individual and his family."

Some recent studies of the subject of primitive ownership appear to show that the communistic theory is mythical, not only for private property but for the ownership of land. Completer investigation makes clear that individualistic ownership both preceded and followed common control and ownership. This is the thesis of Jan St. Lewinski (*The Origin of Property*, Lectures delivered at the London School of Economics, 1913) who maintains that individual ownership was always the first form of property . . . "from a state of no property, individual ownership generally originates once labor has been incorporated in the soil" (p. 22). Pure nomads and hunting peoples have no private property in land, but land is not common property among them. It is merely a free good, to appropriate which is not worth the trouble. The evidence of existing primitive peoples, says Lewinski, shows clearly that the village community was not the primitive stage but was preceded by individual appropriation. "Thus the principal pillars of the communistic theory are already demolished!" he writes (p. 30). Private property in personal effects, like clothes, weapons, domestic animals (in songs, also, it might be added) prevails everywhere, it appears, even among the peoples lowest in the cultural scale, and it has probably existed from time immemorial. For a recent American book, taking the same position as Lewinski's, see Robert H. Lowie, *Primitive Society* (1920), chapter IX.

\* "Yet when we come to realize what we mean by saying a custom, a tale, a myth, arose from the Folk, I fear we must come to the conclusion that the said Folk is a fraud, a delusion, a myth . . . The Folk is a name for our ignorance." *Folk Lore*, iv, 234, June, 1893.



senter from the doctrine of folk-origins or folk creation. But the view of these men did not become the accepted view. "We search for poetry before the poet,"<sup>9</sup> said a leading scholar. "Poetry of the people is made by any given race through the same mysterious process which forms speech, cult, myth, custom, or law."<sup>10</sup>

At the present time, however, continental Europe, from which the doctrine of communal inspiration emerged, has given it up. Its strongest remaining foothold is in the United States, the country into which the doctrine last entered.

The whole theory of a communal mind from which emerged law and institutions and from which on festal occasions are (or were) born language and literature rests upon the romantic enterprise of sociologists, who thought to write a psychology of men *en masse* apart from any sane reliance upon the analysis of individual minds—very much as if one were to endeavor to cut a physical robe for mankind as a whole with no thought of individual arms and legs. This effort issued in the bizarre belief in a collective soul which is not to be found in the nature of the souls of the individuals which compose the social group, but which in some mystic sense enwraps the individuals in its all-obscuring fog. Such a "communal mind" or "mob mind" or "gesamtgeist," as you may choose to call it, has no actuality which science or sense can observe. If history and indeed ethnology betray clearly one fact it is that there is no such "mental homogeneity" among men. As a critical hypothesis the whole communal prepossession has led mainly into misconception and misvaluation; its service (for service of a sort it is) has been to arouse an interest and an industry in its support which have only succeeded in demonstrating its futility. In other words, it is honorably shelved by its own inability to stand the test of substantial evidence.

But in this connection it ought to be in place to point out that there is another and classical concept in criticism which might well have its value restored. The *consensus gentium*, meaning the critical agreement of instructed opinion, is an idea which in law underlies all theories of government which proceed *ex communi*

<sup>9</sup> F. B. Gummere, "The Ballad and Communal Poetry," *Harvard Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature*, V, 55.

<sup>10</sup> *Old English Ballads*, p. xxxvi. For a recent German view, taking the contrary position concerning the genesis of folk-song, see Alfred Götze, *Vom Deutschen Volkslied*, 1921.

*consensu* and in the arts is regarded by Aristotle and Longinus as well as by the best of Renaissance critics as the securest anchorage of valuations in matters of taste.<sup>11</sup> It is needless to point out that such a conception is poles remote from the romantic *Volksgeist* figment. Where the "mob soul" calls for the play of unconsciousness, the classical *consensus* calls for deliberate and trained conscious effort; where "communalism" seeks formlessly to express feeling, the *consensus* judges (as Rousseau has it) in the "calm of the passions";<sup>12</sup> and where the primitivist seeks to replace human thought

<sup>11</sup> The argument from universal consent (*consensus omnium gentium*) is formulated by Aristotle at the very beginning of the *Topics* (i, 1): "As for probable truths, they are such as are admitted by all men, or by the generality of men, or by wise men; and among these last either by all the wise, or by the generality of the wise, or by such of the wise as are of the highest authority." The argument, however, was especially adopted by the Stoics, whose literature it pervades, and given Latin form by such Stoic writers as Cicero (cf. *De Natura Deorum*, i, 17; ii, 2); and *Tusculanae Disputationes* i, 15: ("quod si omnium consensus vox naturae est") and Seneca. Bacon, with the example of excessive deference to the authority of Aristotle before him, remarks: "Verus enim consensus is est, qui ex libertate iudicii in idem conveniente consistit (*Instauratio Magno*, Pars II, Liber i, Aph. lxxvii). As used in criticism, the evidence of the consensus of trained minds is regarded as especially valid as the natural answer to the mediaeval maxim, *de gustibus et coloribus non est disputandum*; and it is, in fact, the bulwark of any theory of sound criticism in art and letters. Here again the foundation of the idea is in Aristotle—both in the *Politics* and the *Poetics*, especially Chapter XXVI of the latter work, where he defines the higher art as in every case that which appeals to the better auditor, or the cultivated spectator (*θεατῆς ἐπιεικῆς*); see, also, Butcher, *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art*, Ch. IV). But the *locus classicus* of the idea, in this critical sense, is without doubt Longinus, *De Sublimitate* vii, where he defines the true test of elevation in letters as the judgment of a man of intelligence, versed in letters: 'true beauty and sublimity please always and please all.' Compare also Courthope, *Life in Poetry, Law in Taste*, I. Of course, in all this the judicial rather than the creative mind is in regard; but can there be any valuable creation without selective judgment? Can art, in other words, begin without at least the impulse of conscious intention, as the mob-soul theories imply that it does? Perhaps if the phrase "work of art" were refocused in critical thought, with right emphasis upon the *work*, we should have less vogue of sociological puerilities and more respect for the classics of critical theory.

<sup>12</sup> In the first version of the *Contrat Social* (Livre I, Chapitre II) Rousseau says: "que la volonté générale soit dans chaque individu un acte pur de l'entendement qui raisonne dans le silence des passions sur que l'homme peut exiger de son semblable, et sur ce que son semblable en droit d'exiger de lui, nul n'en disconviendra." In view of the fact that to no light degree upon Rousseau has been fathered the whole *chute* of modern thought which has ended in the mire of sociological mysticism, it is of no small interest to note how painstakingly intellectualistic Rousseau intended to be. No doubt his "moi commun" is in part at least the hapless progenitor of our modern *Volksgeister*, communal selves, and mob souls; but when (*De l'économie politique*) he employed the analogy of an

by dancing puppets the critic of the tradition endeavors to single out, from the midst of puppetdom, creative human intelligences. Obviously, conscious effort, cool judgment, and creative intelligence are gifts of men, not of mobs; and it was perhaps too much to expect from a romantic century interest in these qualities.<sup>13</sup>

## II. THE TERM "COMMUNAL" AND FOLK-SONG

Although the doctrine of communal inspiration played a large rôle during the nineteenth century in theories of the growth of law and language and of other human institutions, the word "communal" itself was little used in many of these fields. It came into the foreground chiefly in anthropology, sociology, psychology, and literature.<sup>14</sup> In American criticism, the term has its most frequent use in connection with discussions of traditional ballads. Its currency has not derived from Professor Child, who preferred "popular." Professor Child speaks of "popular" ballads and "popular"

animal body to define the functions of the body politic, and likened the life of the whole to a "moi commun," he was actually on classical ground and employing a Platonic figure. It is worth while, however, to point to a very interesting alteration of phrasology between the first draft and the final form of the key passage to the *Contrat Social* which of itself appears to indicate that Rousseau half feared the very misinterpretation which his phrase has been given. He defines the terms of the theoretical contract: "Chacun de nous met en commun sa volonté, ses biens, sa force, et sa personne, sous la direction de la volonté générale, et nous recevons tous en corps chaque membre comme partie inaliénable du tout." He then, in the first form, continues: "A l'instant, au lieu de la personne particulière de chaque contractant, cet acte d'association produit un corps moral et collectif, composé d'autant de membres que l'assemblée a de voix, et auquel le moi commun donne l'unité formelle, la vie et la volonté." In the final version the last phrase is altered to "lequel [corps moral et collectif] reçoit de ce même acte son unité, son moi commun, sa vie et sa volonté." The subordination of the "moi commun" is obviously the intention of the change. Of course Rousseau never dreamed of the "over-individual ego" or of the "blind will" of a psychic underworld which were later to miscolor critical judgment.

<sup>13</sup> I am indebted for assistance in my examination of material from the fields of law, sociology, and philosophy to my brother, Dean Roscoe Pound of the Harvard Law School, to J. E. Le Rossignol, Professor of Economics at the University of Nebraska, and especially to H. B. Alexander, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Nebraska.

<sup>14</sup> The word *communal* is as old as the *Song of Roland* (*tuit en sunt communal*, in the sense of *tous y prennent part*, l. 475, cited by Littré). Later it usually denotes what has to do with a *commune*. As a critical term in English it belongs to the nineteenth century. Impetus was given to *commune* after the title was assumed by Parisian political desperadoes during the Reign of Terror. The word *communal* entered English through French influence, early in the century, in the sense of pertaining to a *commune*. By the middle of the century it was in use in the sense of pertaining to a community.

origins. It was introduced by Professor Francis B. Gummere<sup>15</sup> in his edition of the *Old English Ballads* (1894). When seeking for a differentiating epithet for the English traditional ballads he writes: <sup>16</sup>

As a mere makeshift, however, one might use the word "communal." A communal ballad is a narrative ballad of tradition which represents a community or folk, not a section or class of that community, and not a single writer.

If, after introducing the term, he had employed it always in this sense, his usage would better bear examination. But he soon went far beyond this original definition. He came to employ the word not only for denoting what "represents" a community and does not come from a single hand, but for what a community as over against an individual has created, on social occasions. He makes spontaneous communal creation, not gradual re-creation by a succession of singers, a test of origins. Folk-poetry originates communally, he affirms, artistic poetry is created by individuals. His disciples have continued his usage; and by our own time the term has become pretty firmly entrenched in textbooks and literary histories. Few American scholars write of folk poetry in these days without relying upon the word.

The following are some conceptions associated with the term "communal" which I think invalid. It seems probable to me that they will eventually be given up in America, as they are now abandoned in continental Europe.

1. It is no more a demonstrated fact that poetry had communal origin than it is that language had such origin, or law, or that property was originally owned in common. Assumptions like Professor Gummere's "The original ballad must have been sung by all as it was danced by all,"<sup>17</sup> or "Poetry was a communal product,"

<sup>15</sup> Behind his employment of "communal" lay German influence. He wished to make for English a distinction similar to that afforded by Franz Böhme's *volkslieder* and *volksthümliche lieder* (*Liederbuch*, 1877). Gummere's "communal mind" suggests Wundt's *volkseel*, or his *gesamtgeist*. He may also have had in mind Steinthal's *dichtender volksgeist*, or Lachmann's *gemeinsames dichten*. He comments on these terms at some length in the introduction to his *Old English Ballads*, and in "The Ballad and Communal Poetry," in the Child Memorial volume of *Harvard Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature*. Otto Immisch (*Die innere Entwicklung des griechischen Epos*, 1904) coins the name *Gemeinschaftsdichtung*.

<sup>16</sup> *Old English Ballads*, p. xxvii.

<sup>17</sup> *Old English Ballads*, p. lxxxvii.

are assumptions and nothing more. Investigation of the song of primitive peoples shows that primitive song is not always danced; that primitive lyrics are not narrative and hence should be termed songs not ballads; and that they are not necessarily nor even preponderatingly of social inspiration. Communal inspiration should no longer be over-insisted upon for primitive song. Songs composed by individuals and songs sung by groups of singers are found among the most primitive of living races. The conception of individual song can be shown to exist among the very lowest peoples. That in the earliest stage there was group utterance merely, arising from the folk-dance, and that individual composition came later is fanciful hypothesis. The communal authorship and ownership of primitive poetry as over against culture poetry is largely a myth.<sup>18</sup> "Communal" inspiration of poetry is true in the same sense in primitive as in civilized communities and only in the same sense.<sup>19</sup>

2. It is also erroneous to assume that peasant communities originate their own ballads or narrative songs. The product of folk-improvisation is not typically the *ballad* but the *song*, and song so produced is the most ephemeral type of song. The folk improvise largely to familiar airs.<sup>20</sup> They do not create their own melodies, and especially not on the spur of the moment. They make over, or add stanzas to, or somehow manipulate, something already in existence. The typical products of folk-improvisation are the lam-

<sup>18</sup> The best instance of communal composition among the Indians which I can cite is the following, which was recently brought to my attention. The paragraph is from Frances Densmore's "Northern Ute Music" (1922) p. 26, a volume issued as Bulletin 76 of the Publications of the American Bureau of Ethnology.

Composition of Songs.—It was said by several singers that they "heard a song in their sleep," sang it, and either awoke to find themselves singing it aloud or remembered it and were able to sing it. No information was obtained on any other method of producing songs. In this connection the writer desires to record an observation on musical composition among the Sioux. A song was sung at a gathering and she remarked: "That is different from any Sioux song I have ever heard, it has so many peculiarities." The interpreter replied, "That song was composed recently by several men working together. Each man suggested something and they put it all together in the song." This is the only instance of cooperation in the composition of an Indian song that has been observed, adds Miss Densmore.

<sup>19</sup> Evidence supporting this and the following generalizations has been presented by me in various articles published in the *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, *Modern Language Notes*, etc.

<sup>20</sup> The extent to which old airs are preserved is quite astonishing. Many of our current hymns and popular songs are set to century-old melodies—originally made for songs of quite another character.

poor, the satire, the adaptation. This was well illustrated by the improvisations of groups of singing soldiers during the recent war. It has often been pointed out that in the Southern Appalachians exist isolated communities, unlettered and cut off for a hundred years from traffic with the rest of the world; and these communities still entertain themselves with traditional song. Conditions are ideal for the creation of communal ballads, according to the orthodox theory. Yet their investigators have not found that they have any body of song of their own creation, whether pure lyrics or ballads. They still sing the English and Scottish ballads brought over by their ancestors.<sup>21</sup> Self-created songs about their own life are conspicuously wanting. The Southwestern cowboys perhaps live as communal a life as any in our period; possibly they are more literate than the mountaineers, but they are little more creative. The bulk of their songs entered their circles from the outside world. Where they have songs concerning themselves, they are fitted to familiar melodies, and (at least the songs which have value or memorableness) are adaptations of already existent material. The best cowboy songs, having claim to originality, may be traced to minor poets. The cowboy songs which are nearest to genuine communal creations are those of weakest quality, are not narrative, and are in character most ephemeral.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> See Olive Dame Campbell and Cecil J. Sharp, *English Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachians*, 1917.

A critic who has recently reaffirmed belief in the emergence of the English and Scottish ballad type from the unschooled peasantry is Professor G. H. Gerould, *Mod. Philol.* xxi, August, 1923.

<sup>22</sup> The orthodox contemporary American conception of the spontaneous, gregarious composition of the English and Scottish traditional ballads, on social occasions, may be illustrated by the familiar picture (Introd. to the Cambridge edition of the English and Scottish Ballads, 1904) of a plausible method of composition of "The Hangman's Tree," or of some remote ancestor of it, by a homogeneous group; or, to go to a more recent book, by the picture of the composition of "Sir Patrick Spens" in Greenlaw, Elson, and Keck's *Literature and Life*, Book I, p. 237 (1922):

"... imagine that you are one of a group of people who have been powerfully moved by the tragic fate of Sir Patrick. You knew him or some of his men. In this group the tragedy is being discussed. One man says he heard that Sir Patrick suspected the hand of an enemy, but that he was too brave to draw back even though he knew that the voyage meant death. Another says that an old sailor observed portents and omens and promised a tragic outcome. A third adds that such omens ought never to be disregarded. Others wonder how the wives and sweethearts of the dead sailors felt when they heard the news, and they speak of the unutterable sadness of their waiting at home, for tidings. And at last some one speaks of the dead men themselves, lying down there fifty fathoms under the

3. Another familiar doctrine that needs qualification or rejection is the doctrine that "communal" ("traditional" is the better term) preservation of a song brings improvement in the narrative quality of the song. This is a fundamental belief with Professor Gummere, and on it he bases his theory of origins. It is true that there is sometimes improvement in scattered instances. Ballads both gain and lose in oral transmission. When a later text of a song in popular tradition is compared with the original text, the dramatic quality is often found to be enhanced by the omission of stanzas and of links in the story and the retention only of what is absolutely essential. There may also be gain in compactness, in singableness, and in concreteness of diction. A few examples have been cited to the present writer by the British collector of folk-song, Cecil J. Sharp, where the melodies of songs have improved in popular preservation. And occasional instances can be brought up, as already remarked, where individual texts show improvement. But, as a principle, the doctrine does not hold. Individual texts may grow better here and there for a time, especially in the mouths of superior singers. But a single text of a ballad is not the ballad itself. While one text is improving another may be degenerating. Professor Child was right when he said that the ballad is at its best "the earlier it is caught and fixed in print."<sup>23</sup> And in the long

sea, their dead eyes open, their bodies gently rolling from side to side with the motion of the water, or too far below the surface ever to move. You see you have, in reality, a succession of broken bits of talk, expressions of mood, not a story told in an orderly way or written up for the newspaper. One member of the group and then another adds his bit. There are moments of silence between. All are thinking of the horror, and deeply moved. Then perhaps one, or two, or three, begin to put the thing into words. The words fit some simple song that everyone knows. The group begins to sing the song. The ballad is born.

Thus the ballad seems not to be a story at all but just the expression of the feelings of a whole group of people. It differs from the story in that it seems to tell itself. It is not the work of an author who gives to the events an interpretation or who carefully chooses details so that a definite impression is built up in the mind of the reader. It expresses the reactions of a group. It is impersonal. *It is a tale telling itself.*"

There is a conspicuous lack of evidence for the typical composition of ballads in such a way, anywhere, or at any time, even among primitive peoples; and it is difficult to show that it is a method of composition that is psychologically plausible. Yet nearly all the available ballad anthologies for schools (see W. D. Armes, xxxviii ff.; Neilson and Witham, xv and footnote; G. H. Stempel, xxvii ff., etc.) paint for their readers this manner of composition for the English and Scottish ballads.

<sup>23</sup> See W. M. Hart, "Professor Child and the Ballad," *PMLA* XXI (1906), 770, 805, etc.

run, even the text which has improved falls into decay. A traditionally preserved text is not static, and there is no permanent incorporation into its multiple variants, of improvements which may arise. At best there is betterment, through so-called communal preservation, only for sporadic texts and for a limited extent of time. The typical process for the great majority of traditional ballads is a process of decay.

4. The belief that the pattern or technique of the English and Scottish ballad derives from a pattern set in remote times by a singing dancing throng improvising communally is all that remains among certain thinkers of the nineteenth century communal theory. But even this remainder of that theory does not deserve the support which it receives. The refrains, salient situations, repetitions and commonplaces of style appearing in many ballads (these are the features which are traced to primitive times) need no such pre-historic derivation; nor are they such fundamental *differentiae* of the ballad technique as is commonly assumed. They are easily to be accounted for in the same ways as for other species of folk-song exhibiting them which are not termed ballads. The songs of primitive groups improvising on festal occasions and the ballads appearing in historic times among civilized peoples do not belong in the same framework, and they should be kept distinct. Taken down in a straight line to modern times, the songs of primitive festal groups bring us, on the improvisation side, to modern folk-improvisations, like those of singing soldiers, not an extinct type of folk-song, though not one of much frequency nor one bringing very valuable product. Taken down to historic times on the movement side, the primitive group songs bring us to the ring-dance or movement or game songs which still exist among us, songs in which the refrain is the essential feature. But neither of these varieties of folk-song, the group improvisation song or the dance or game song centering about a refrain, is identical with the story-song or ballad, and neither variety develops into the ballad. The narrative song is an independent lyric type, and it first appears, not among primitive peoples, but in historic times and among civilized peoples. All races, primitive or civilized, have folk-songs, but not all have an important body of ballad poetry. The richness in ballads of the popular poetry of England and Denmark is not typical but unusual.



5. Further, it is surely time that definition of the lyric species, ballad, as "of communal composition" should be given up.<sup>24</sup> At least, such composition should be brought forward as hypothetical, not as a demonstrated fact. It is not a valid assumption, even for that single species of ballad, the traditional folk ballad. Remarks such as Professor Gummere's "A ballad must be the outcome and expression of a whole community and this community must be homogeneous"<sup>24</sup> are not warranted by the evidence. This homogeneity is a myth. It is a myth for mediaeval times, as Chaucer realized when he differentiated the types of tales which he placed in the mouths of the Canterbury pilgrims. Even in Anglo-Saxon England, with its clearly marked class divisions of *æðelingas*, *eorlas*, *ceorlas*, *lætas*, *ðeowas*, there was no time when "society from king to peasant" had identical interests. And even the songs of primitive peoples do not originate as "the outcome and expression of the whole community." It is also misleading to associate the term "communal" invariably with the *ballad*, ignoring other lyric species which deserve the term (however they may have originated) far more than does the ballad, i.e., hymns, labor songs, student songs, game songs. The term has attached itself to ballads; yet it should not be emphasized as something which differentiates ballads. Indeed, those who discuss ballads are much given to confusing several kinds of song which properly should be carefully distinguished. These kinds are: (1) *Folk-improvisations*, a type of verse which appears among all peoples, at all stages of development, from primitive gatherings to folk-gatherings (like those of soldiers) in our own day.<sup>25</sup> But this type of verse is not very durable or very important. The product of the folk-improvisations of the illiterate, in particular, has been rated far too high; (2) *Genuine traditional game or ring-dance songs*, or dance songs proper, like those (many of them once danced to by grown-ups) traditional in children's games; and (3) *Lyric-epics*, or *ballads proper*, a type appearing in England some centuries after the Norman Conquest and attaining its height in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It is partly because folk-improvisations lack *story* form, and because genuine

<sup>24</sup> *Old English Ballads*, p. xxvii. A recent critic who reaffirms belief in the homogeneous throng and communal origins is Professor H. S. V. Jones, *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, vol. xxii, January, 1923.

<sup>25</sup> Here, and not under the classification "ballads," belongs the "Hinkie Dinkie" of Mr. Atcheson L. Hench ("Communal Composition of Ballads in the A. E. F.," *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, vol. 34, p. 386).

dance songs of traditional preservation are not narrative, that such origin is to be doubted for the English and Scottish lyric-epics collected by Professor Child. According to all the evidence to be found, neither folk-improvisation nor folk-dancing has ever produced narrative song, or any other kind of song which is worth much poetically.

6. Lastly, even when we speak of "communal re-creation" rather than communal creation of ballads, we are using the term without real accuracy. There is re-creation by individual hands of songs in popular tradition, but is this truly "communal?" One singer in a community makes one set of changes, another makes another set. Indeed the same singer does not always sing a song in the same way, or with the same words. The changes are not the product of a *gesamtgeist*. There is no communal text; there are many shifting texts in the mouths of many singers. The term "communal" is without real validity even when we use it, not of the creation of ballads, but of their re-creation or modification.

The conclusion to be drawn from the preceding considerations is that, on the whole, literary historians and makers of textbooks, would do well to give less conspicuous place to the now hopelessly misused term "communal" in discussions of balladry and folk-song, in the hope that this omission might generate in them a new temper when theorizing concerning poetic origins. They should also cease to derive the ballad from the "homogeneous throng" whether of mediæval peasantry or of primitive tribes. A doctrine of inspiration which is now discarded in other fields should not linger with belated tenacity in literary criticism. Professor Child exhibited characteristic soundness of judgment when he preferred the terms "popular" and "traditional"—by far the safer terms—and when he remarked of the English and Scottish ballads that "a man and not a people has composed them," and that "the ballad is not originally the product or the property of the common orders of people."<sup>26</sup>

1923

<sup>26</sup> Johnson's *Cyclopaedia*, article "Ballads."

## ON THE DATING OF THE ENGLISH AND SCOTTISH BALLADS

The practice has established itself among literary historians and anthologists of associating the English and Scottish ballads primarily with the fifteenth century, sometimes with the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. One of the best and most popular of the histories of English literature now used in schools and colleges states in its revised editions: "These ballads appear to have flourished luxuriantly among the folk in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, after which their composition ceased. Over three hundred of them, in 1,300 versions, have survived, and have been collected and printed."<sup>1</sup> The now widely used *History of English Literature* by M. Emile Legouis, the most ambitious among recent histories of our literature, remarks of the ballads: "They cannot all be claimed for the fifteenth century, for poems of this sort must have had an earlier beginning and certainly were produced until a later time, but the impulse to make them seems to have been particularly active in this century, to which, moreover, the oldest extant specimens belong."<sup>2</sup> A recent excellent poetical anthology has: "Ballad is the name applied to a simple form of narrative poetry which in England and Scotland flourished between the fourteenth

<sup>1</sup> Moody and Lovett, *History of English Literature*, 1902, 1918, etc., page 67.

<sup>2</sup> *A History of English Literature: The Middle Ages and the Renaissance*. Translated by H. D. Irvine. 1926.

and sixteenth centuries."<sup>3</sup> Statements like these leave with readers the definite impression that the fifteenth century was the heyday of ballad production, and that the bulk of the three hundred ballads in Professor Child's collection emerged from this century, or from an even earlier period.

An examination of the standard historical anthologies used in schools and colleges leaves the same impression with readers. In one of the most recent,<sup>4</sup> the exhibit of English ballads—including "Edward" and "Sir Patrick Spens"—comes directly after Chaucer. The display precedes, not follows, lyrics like the well-known "Cuckoo Song" of the thirteenth century, "Springtime," "Alysoun," "A Plea for Pity," "Blow, Northern Wind," and even the *Quem Quaeritis* trope. Another,<sup>5</sup> under the heading "Chaucer to the Renaissance," enters "Captain Car," or "Edom O'Gordon," "Lord Randal," "The Wife of Usher's Well," and "Bonny Barbara Allan." Another<sup>6</sup> has "Edward," "Sir Patrick Spens," "The Wife of Usher's Well," "The Two Corbies," and "Mary Hamilton," under "The Later Middle Ages." Another<sup>7</sup> has, under "The End of the Middle Ages," "Edward," "Sir Patrick Spens," "The Wife of Usher's Well," "Bonnie George Campbell." Another,<sup>8</sup> one of the most recent enters under the heading "The Age of Chaucer," "Edward," "Sir Patrick Spens," "The Wife of Usher's Well," "Bonny Barbara Allan," and "Johnny Armstrong." These precede, as in the anthology first cited, the thirteenth-century "Cuckoo Song," and the early lyrics, "Springtime," "Alysoun," "A Plea for Pity," and "Blow, Northern Wind." Another,<sup>9</sup> which has on the whole careful chron-

<sup>3</sup> Jacob Zeitlin and Clarissa Rinaker. *Types of Poetry*, 1926.

<sup>4</sup> James Dow McCallum, *The Beginnings to 1500*, 1929. Scribner's English Literature series.

<sup>5</sup> J. W. Cunliffe, J. F. A. Pyre, Karl Young, *Century Readings in English Literature*, 1929.

<sup>6</sup> Lieder, Lovett, and Root, *British Poetry and Prose*, 1928.

<sup>7</sup> Snyder and Martin, *A Book of English Literature*, 1916. "The End of the Middle Ages" is also the heading under which ballads are placed in J. M. Manly's *English Poetry 1170-1892*, 1907.

<sup>8</sup> T. P. Cross and C. T. Goode, *Readings in the Literature of England*, 1927.

<sup>9</sup> H. S. Pancoast, *English Verse and Prose*, 1915. "Middle English Writers" is the heading under which ballads are grouped in *The Modern Student's Book of English Literature*, by H. M. Ayres, W. D. Howe, and F. M. Padelford, 1924. G. H. Gerould in his *Old English and Medieval Literature* (1929) devotes more than a hundred pages to illustrations of fifteenth-century literature. All but about twenty of these pages are given over to a miscellany of Child ballads, among them "Mary Hamilton," Percy's literary text of "Edward," etc.

ological arrangement, supplies the heading "Ballads of Uncertain Date," but enters among them "The Nut-Brown Maid," and "Helen of Kirconnell," the first of which is, as pointed out long ago, a verse debate, a bit of special pleading, while the second is a pure lyric. Both were once accounted ballads but both were excluded from his collection by Professor Child. Professor Reed Smith, in a recent anthology of South Carolina ballads<sup>10</sup> writes of "Five Hundred Years of 'The Maid Freed from the Gallows'," remarking that it was "composed before Chaucer's pilgrimage," although our earliest text of it comes from the Percy Papers of the eighteenth century and we are ignorant of its antecedent history. There is not a scrap of evidence to connect it with the days before Chaucer's pilgrimage.

Account of ballads or displays of ballad texts are often accompanied by statements such as "ballads have no dates," "it is impossible to assign dates to ballads," or "the dates of ballads are unknown"; and this explains, no doubt, the far from careful way in which the texts are placed chronologically. The effect, however, on the users of anthologies is to lead them to believe that the body of the Child ballads, or at least, the illustrative texts entered for the student to read, date from before the Renaissance.

Professor Ewald Fluegel, in an article in *Anglia* as far back as 1899,<sup>11</sup> made a valuable survey of the dating of the ballad texts. He found that one of the Child texts comes from the thirteenth century, none from the fourteenth, very few from the fifteenth (only a few clerical and greenwood pieces antedate 1500), and ten or fewer may come from the sixteenth. Thus not more than fifteen or twenty, at the most liberal estimate, of the texts coming down to us antedate 1600. The number usually given is eleven.<sup>12</sup> The rest of the hundreds of the Child texts come from the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. The date of the recovery of ballad texts is not the same thing, of course, as establishing the dates of their origin. A ballad may have been composed much earlier than the earliest text of it that happened to be preserved. Naturally, too, most texts would reach us from later centuries,

<sup>10</sup> *South Carolina Ballads*. 1928.

<sup>11</sup> *Anglia*, xxi, Neue Folge, ix, 312-358.

<sup>12</sup> Cf., for instance: "Only some eleven of the ballads are preserved in documents older than the seventeenth century." *Century Readings in English Literature*, page 105.

since conscious efforts to find and to preserve ballads came late. But, at least, Professor Fluegel's survey affords no evidence for the pre-Renaissance period as that of their greatest popularity and production. It does not justify sentences like "After the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries their composition ceased." Other lyric matter, both popular and secular, has come down to us in abundance from before the Renaissance, but, curiously enough, not ballads.

Professor Frank Bryant in his Harvard dissertation on the history of ballads,<sup>13</sup> reached the conclusion: "If the Child type was at all common [in the reign of Elizabeth] the almost universal silence about it is as strange as it was undeserved. . . . My own conclusion," he adds, "—oft arrived at—is, therefore, that the Child ballad was not much current in Southern England." Professor Bryant reached this opinion after a careful survey of the history of English and Scottish ballad material, and I have always felt inclined to agree with him.

Is it not time that we stopped repeating so mechanically and unqualifiedly that "ballads have no dates"? Though we may not be able to date accurately a large number of them, yet each had its date if we could find it. Occasionally the general period from which a ballad emerged can be determined by the nature or content—the subject-matter or story—of the oldest text; or by the slant of the composer in handling his narrative; or by the ballad style in which he composed. To illustrate, among the Robin Hood ballads, those in which England is reflected as yet Catholic must have come from the period before the Protestantizing of England. Those in which Robin Hood is burlesqued or disparaged must have been late of composition, when the tradition was in its decay. The ballads of "The Hunting of the Cheviot" and "The Battle of Otterburne" cannot have preceded the events with which they profess to deal, although the composition of them might come from as late as the early sixteenth century, much as our best-known poem of John Brown comes, not from the date of his activities but from our own decade. The allegorical "Rose of England," reflects unmistakably the period of the civil Wars of the Roses. The *terminus a quo*, at least, can often be established with no uncertainty at all. Ballads cannot be earlier than the events they celebrate, where they are not obviously adaptations, as certain American narratives, of pieces already in existence.

<sup>13</sup> *A History of British Balladry*, 1913, page 192.

I wish here to protest, in general, against the customary sweeping references by literary historians and critics to "the ballads," accompanied by no effort to place them with whatever chronological exactness may be possible. There are many layers of the Child ballads. They come from different periods and different regions, and they are composed in different styles. When we group them historically we ought to try to do so with discrimination, selecting as carefully as we can those that may best be associated with the historical period that we have in mind. The association may be suggested by the events treated, or the character of the narrative, or by the style, or by the date of recovery of the text. But certainly one of these considerations should be taken into account when texts are presented to illustrate certain periods. The Child ballads include many classes: sacred legends and classical stories, riddle ballads, and wit contests, ballads of the greenwood (these are earlier types), chronicle ballads, Border ballads, ballads of the dying or dead, nautical ballads, ballads of domestic tragedy, love stories, romances, ballads of the supernatural, humorous ballads. They bear plain traces of emerging from different periods and of conforming to changing tastes. It is as unscientific to speak sweepingly of "the ballads" as it is to speak of the body of English sonnets, from four centuries, as "the sonnets," or to speak of "the odes," "the hymns," or "the elegies," as though they were the homogeneous products of one or two periods.

Let us return to the matter of the ballad groupings made by literary anthologists. The events chronicled in "Johnny Armstrong" took place, according to Professor Child's investigations, in 1530. The ballad might have been composed some time after that date. It could not have been composed before it. Why allow it, then, to appear in the Age of Chaucer? The burning of the house of Towie by Captain Car ("Edom O'Gordon") occurred in 1571. Why, then, place the ballad telling of this event before 1500, as though antedating the Renaissance? "Mary Hamilton" belongs, in the events narrated, in the reign of Mary Stuart. Why place it under "The Later Middle Ages"? We first hear of "Barbara Allan" as the Scotch song of a London actress, heard by the diarist Samuel Pepys. It is about what it ought to be for a stage song of the seventeenth century. A hundred years later Goldsmith heard it sung by a dairy-maid, the natural fate of a London success of the preceding century. Yet this song also has been placed in the "Age of Chaucer."

Sir Walter Scott's striking text of "The Wife of Usher's Well" is a favorite among ballads placed in early periods by anthologists. His is a rather suspicious version, probably touched up by him. The texts of this ballad are yet to be studied; but those that are not Scott's, (especially the American texts, which often retain earlier features of the Child ballads than do those from the Old World) are so different from his as to bring his into question. In any case, the ballad gives better testimony concerning late eighteenth-century Scottish folk-song than it does concerning that of Chaucer's time. "The Two Corbies" is another of Scott's texts, and sounds like it. If this song is to be placed "Before the Renaissance," it would be wiser to select the earlier seventeenth-century text of it from *Melismata* (1611), "The Three Ravens," than to go to Scott's *Minstrelsy* of 1802. Much the same protest may be made against "Edward," placed early by a majority of anthologists, doubtless because of the formerly-held theory that "situation songs" represent a very early type. Percy's version of "Edward" is a quite isolated one, composed in literary Scotch of the eighteenth century. Professor Archer Taylor has pointed out<sup>14</sup> that the many other texts of this song are not debased versions of Percy's texts. Percy's may be the manipulated text, while the other versions represent an older form of the story. "Edward" no more belongs properly in the Age of Chaucer than does "Lord Randal," for which Sir Walter Scott's is one of the older English texts. We have our first knowledge of this song as belonging to the repertory of an Italian professional singer in Verona in the seventeenth century. That it existed in England at Chaucer's time is extremely unlikely. Of "Sir Patrick Spens" we know nothing before Percy's *Reliques*. "Bonnie George Campbell" is almost a pure lyric, hardly a ballad at all, and it cannot be traced back of the eighteenth century.

In general, an impressive number of the Child ballads can be dated by the events they describe. To illustrate, the sea fight narrated in "Sir Andrew Barton" took place in 1511. The exploit celebrated in "Jock O the Side" took place about 1550, and that in "Archie O Cawfield" about 1579. That referred to in "Willie Macintosh" came in 1592, and so did the events in the "Bonnie Earl of Murray" and "The Laird O Logie." "The Lads O Wamphray" tells of a skirmish that took place in 1593. The exploit told in

<sup>14</sup> "The Texts of 'Edward' in Percys' 'Reliques' and Motherwell's 'Minstrelsy'." *MLN*, April, 1930.



"Kinmont Willie" took place in 1596. The murder in "The Laird of Wariston" took place in 1600. Lord Maxfield of "Lord Maxfield's Last Goodnight" was executed in 1613. The pillaging of the "Bonny House of Airlie" was in 1640. Johnny Faa of "The Gypsy Laddie" belonged in the first half of the century; he was executed in 1624. The death of "Bessie Bell and Mary Gray" may be referred to the plague of 1645, etc.<sup>15</sup>

It is natural, I think, that the fifteenth century, despite its meagreness of ballad production, should be given chief emphasis in literary histories and anthologies. It is more convenient to give them space there than in the crowded following century, the sixteenth, or to let them follow Percy's *Reliques* in the yet more crowded eighteenth century. Another reason for our favoring the fifteenth century is that we like to think of "the ballads" vaguely as "old," and the fifteenth century affords a last chance to enter them as mediæval. The tradition started of presenting them here; it has never been given up, nor its validity questioned. Probably it need not be given up. Ballads may be treated with a degree of appropriateness in the fifteenth century as a time when the type was definitely emerging. The century should not have too great emphasis, however, nor should students be led to believe that they flourished luxuriantly then, and that soon after their composition ceased. Further, the texts cited in illustration should be confined to those that, with some probability, may be cited as late mediæval. The canvassings of Fluegel and Bryant suggest the throwing forward of the date of production of the Child ballads, in the mass, until later centuries; and this shift forward is valid, I think. Their heyday came after, not before, the Renaissance.

<sup>15</sup> I have made no exhaustive examination of the Child ballads for the dates of the events they narrate, where these can be determined; but the following are additional examples of ballads dealing, according to Professor Child, with events that occurred in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries: No. 168, "Flodden Field," 170, "The Death of Queen Jane," 171, "Thomas Cromwell," 172, "Musselburgh Field," 174, "Earl Bothwell," 175, "The Rising in the North," 176, "Northumberland Betrayed by Douglas," 177, "The Earl of Westmoreland," 179, "Rookhope Ryde," 180, "King James and Brown," 196, "The Fire of Fren-draught," 197, "James Grant," 198, "Bonny John Seton," 202, "The Battle of Philiphaugh," 203, "The Baron of Brackley," 204, "Jamie Douglas," 205, "Loudon Hill," 206, "Bothwell Bridge," 207, "Lord Delamere," 208, "Lord Derwent-water," 209, "Geordie," 225, "Rob Roy," 229, "Earl Crawford," 230, "The Slaughter of the Laird of Mellerstain," 231, "The Earl of Erroll," 232, "Richie Story," 233, "Andrew Lammie," 236, "The Laird o Drum," 287, "Captain Ward and the Rainbow."

The typical ballads that most writers on the subject recall, when admiring the spirited quality of ballads, their lyrical appeal, and the characteristics of their style, are those of Scotland, of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the selected texts touched up by Sir Walter Scott, or those printed by the great Scottish collectors who specialized in the best texts that they could find. It is partly, too, because of this specialization on the part of the nineteenth-century collectors, and because of our formulation of our ideas of the ballads from the attractive Scotch ballad style, that we have so exalted an idea of the poetical quality of English folk-song as a whole. Weak and crude texts existed, of course, alongside the poetical ones, but no one preserved them. The collectors of the twentieth century preserve whatever they find, good and bad. The great collectors of nineteenth-century Scotland preserved the best they could find, and thought the rest negligible.

The purpose of this brief paper has been to make a plea, first, against overemphasis on the fifteenth century as the heyday of ballad popularity and production; second, against too sweeping assertion that "ballads have no dates"; for it is possible to date, approximately, a surprising number of them; third, against too sweeping references to "the ballads," as though no discriminations need be made concerning them; and, fourth, against too great carelessness of chronological considerations in the selection of texts for period-placement in anthologies.

1931

## FOLKLORE AND DIALECT<sup>1</sup>

Folklore and Dialect have been less closely associated, in the past, than they should be. Surely dialect is a species of folklore, though the two subjects are usually treated independently. Dialect in the sense in which we now ordinarily use the word, is *lore*, linguistic lore, and linguistic lore exists in tradition alongside the folk beliefs and folkways, the folk legacies that we usually term lore.

Among English-speaking peoples interest in folklore arose earlier than interest in dialect. It emerged, indeed, as an offshoot of the European Romantic Movement of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Its beginning is probably to be dated from Jacob Grimm's *Deutsche Mythologie* (1835). If Grimm was the founder of Germanic Philology, as generally recognized, he was also the inspirer of interest in traditional customs, legends, superstitions, and beliefs preserved among the common people. The influence of his *Mythologie* came slowly, rather than at once. It was preceded by his collection of popular children's and domestic tales, Grimm's *Kinder-und-Haus-Märchen* of 1812-1822. He aroused interest in fairy tales, animal tales, legend, folk song before he stimulated scholarly interest in mythology and philology. After him Northern European interest in lore has never lapsed. It was per-

<sup>1</sup> Abridged from an address given at a dinner of the first Western Folklore Conference, at the University of Denver, July 22, 1941.

haps at its height before the outbreak of the Second World War, and not only in Germany, the Scandinavian countries, Finland, and France but in many other areas.

In England scholarly impetus to the study of folklore did not come in the wake of the Romantic Movement but rather through the rise of the Anthropological School, the school culminating in the twelve volumes of Sir James G. Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (1907-1915). Though it did not originate the science of folklore (a distinctly romantic and humanitarian science, if it is one), England must have credit for originating its name. It was in 1846, as is well known, that W. J. Thoms, writing in the *Athenaeum* of August 22 (pp. 862-863) under the name of Ambrose Merton, began his contribution with the words, "What we in England designate Popular Antiquities, or Popular Literature (though, by the bye, it is more of a lore than literature, and would be most aptly designated by a good Saxon compound, 'Folk-Lore'—the lore of the people) . . ." The new name was taken up at once and became accepted over Europe and the two American continents. Europe formed its international society known as the *Folkloristische Forscherbund* or "Folklore Fellows" and Latin America has such publications as *Folklore Americas* and *Asociación Folklórica Argentina*. Some objected for a time to the name folklore as designating both the science and its content; but the same objection might be made for other sciences, such as history and language, for which the usage has become established. The Folklore Society of England, when it was organized, 1878, discussed calling itself the Society of Popular Tradition, but this designation seemed unwieldier and less definite, and Mr. Thoms's suggestion was preferred. In France, however, the *Société des Traditions Populaires* was founded, 1886, and Italy published the quarterly *Archivio per lo Studio delle Tradizioni Popolari*. In both countries the name folklore is now liked. Witness, for example, the *Manuel de Folklore Français Contemporain* of Arnold van Gennep, 1937-1938.

Mr. Thoms when coining his name hyphenated it, as was to be expected, and such was long the usage in this country as well as in England. Occasionally one comes upon the words written separately (folk lore) in popular writing, but of late it has become customary to omit the hyphen and join them. This is the usage of the *Southern Folklore Quarterly* from its establishment in 1937, and, since its change of format, about 1941, the *Journal of the*

*American Folklore Society* has given up its original hyphenation. The *California Folklore Quarterly*, established in 1942, follows the newer practice. The conflation of "folk song," though parallel, came more slowly and has arrived with less finality. "Folk song," was preferred by Olive D. Campbell and Cecil J. Sharp in their *Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachians* (1917). Newman I. White in *American Negro Folk-Songs* (1928) preferred the hyphen. John A. and Alan Lomax entitled their work of 1934 *American Ballads and Folk Songs*, omitting the hyphen. A. H. Hudson, *Folksongs of Mississippi* (1936), wrote the compound as one word. In the July, 1944, issue of the *California Folklore Quarterly*, Bertrand H. Bronson writes of folk music and folk singers but also of British folktunes; and under the heading Folklore News in the same issue appears *folk songs*.<sup>2</sup> The *Dictionary of World Literature* (1943) heads its article on the subject *folksong*.

The English Folk-Lore Society of 1878 preceded the American by a decade or more. Active among its foundation members were such men as Andrew Lang, E. W. Tylor, Alfred Nutt, G. L. Gomme. Its first Annual Report appeared in the *Folk-Lore Record*, vol. 2, 1878. The *Folk-Lore Journal*, superseding the *Record*, at first a monthly and after 1885 a quarterly, was published from January-December, 1883, to Volume VII, 1889. In March, 1890, it was united with the *Archaeological Review* to form *Folk-Lore*, which describes itself as a quarterly review of myth, tradition, institution, and custom. Another new periodical of the end of the century was the *Journal of the Folk-Song Society*, seven volumes of which were published, 1899-1926. The American Folk-Lore Society was founded at Cambridge, January 4, 1888, with Francis James Child as its first president and W. W. Newell its first secretary. The first volume of its publication, the *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, was issued in that year.

## II

As for dialect, it concerns itself with local and regional peculiarities of language, traditionally handed on and therefore lore. It was not an outgrowth of the Romantic Movement nor of Anthropology but of the new science of Philology. Scholarly examination

<sup>2</sup> The appearance of "folktunes" in the Bronson article was a typographical error.

of older dialects, those of Old English, Middle English, and later, preceded interest in our current substandard language. The common speech, folk language, as over against that accepted in educated circles, gained attention in Germany, France, England in the last half of last century. Somewhat later the academic world of America, too, turned to the unexplored linguistic fields about it and collectanea and study began. The British Dialect Society started at Cambridge in 1873, with W. W. Skeat and Joseph and Mary Wright among its active spirits. The monumental *English Dialect Dictionary* in six volumes, edited by Joseph Wright (1898-1905), remains a treasure house of information concerning the dialect vocabularies of England.

The American Dialect Society was founded in January, 1889, by such men as Edward Sheldon, C. H. Grandgent, L. R. Briggs, G. L. Kittredge, all of Harvard, and W. W. Newell, president of the newly founded Folk-Lore Society. Professor F. J. Child, the distinguished ballad scholar, was its first president and C. H. Grandgent its first secretary. It announced as its purpose, in 1894, the publication of a large dictionary of dialect and regional words and localisms. The first volume of *Dialect Notes* was issued in 1896. The Society had a fairly vigorous existence for a number of years, fostered by such succeeding secretaries as O. F. Emerson, W. E. Mead, W. G. Howard, Percy W. Long. Originally a quarterly, *Dialect Notes* came to be issued irregularly. In the 1930's its most valuable work was the printing of unpublished material collected by Richard H. Thornton and stored in the Harvard Library, this capably edited by M. H. Hanley. When I was president of the Society, 1939-1941, I suggested its expansion through the partitioning of its activities into different groups, such as Regional Speech and Localisms, Place Names, Linguistic Geography, Usage, Non-English Dialects, Semantics. These were adopted and, with the addition of New Words and of Proverbs, are in the hands of able chairmen. I also suggested and encouraged the publication for practical use of an *American Dialect Dictionary*, edited by Dr. Harold Wentworth, the first for the United States. America is a large country compared to England and its dialects less clearly marked and less static than the English. The making of an exhaustive coöperative dictionary of the scope of the Wright *English Dialect Dictionary* will have to wait many years for completion. In the half century since it was projected no adequate start has been made. Inquiries for such a work came to

me constantly as an officer of the Dialect Society and an editor of *American Speech*, especially from writers of fiction and drama; yet, though many glossaries of slang have been printed long since, no American glossary of folk speech existed. Dr. Wentworth completed his difficult task, exhibiting excellent scholarship, in minimum time and as exhaustively as the limits of his volume permitted. It was published in 1944 and has already seen wide use.

From 1925 onward, *American Speech*, dealing with many phases of oral and written language, became the avenue of expression for many collectors and contributors from all parts of the country. Under the editorship of Secretary G. P. Wilson, the Dialect Society has resumed the occasional publication of word lists and other matter and more may be expected to emerge from the Society's group activities. In 1931 the important Linguistic Atlas was begun, under the auspices of and financed by the Council of Learned Societies and under the guidance of Dr. Hans Kurath. Well equipped for the phonetic recording of speech, its workers completed their survey of the Atlantic States from Maine to South Carolina (the original thirteen colonies) before the end of the Second World-War period.

When the *Journal* of the American Folk-Lore Society was founded (1888), the relation of dialect to folklore seemed to be felt. The first few volumes had a section, "Wastebasket of Words," in which selected New England terms were commented on. Examples from its list are "delightsome," "dreen" (ebb tide), "coast" (slide down a snow-covered slope in a sled), "give him jessy" (from *jess* in falconry, used to punish a bird), "mammoth" (paw), "cod" (hoax, or make fun of a person by giving him false information). This section was included for several years and then dropped. There were a few linguistic articles in the old issues of the *Journal of American Folk-Lore*. George Patterson of New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, wrote "Notes on the Dialect of the People of Newfoundland" which was read at the meeting of the Montreal Branch of the American Folk-Lore Society, May 21, 1894, and published in the eighth volume of the *JAFLL*. Reginald Pelham Bolton had an article on "The Cockney and His Dialect" in the ninth volume, 1896. "More Notes on the Dialect of the People of Newfoundland" came also in the ninth volume, and "Algonkian Words in English," by Alexander F. Chamberlain, in the fifteenth (1902). A leafing through of later volumes showed no further linguistic contributions, for other avenues of publication became available.

## III

In any discussion of folklore, folk song, or dialect, something should be said of the "folk." Europeans have sometimes remarked that Americans have an obsession for definition and classification. One hopes this is true. Certainly definite, not loose, usage of terms is essential and should be encouraged. "Folk" especially has been used very loosely, and so too have been "ballad" and "tradition." For "ballad," there are at last acceptable dictionary definitions, since the old "definition by origins," with its insistence on emergence from the dance and its overemphasis on creation by the "peasantry," has been given up by scholars abreast of the times. Since we do not know the origin of most of our traditional pieces, this old-time insistence on a single type of origin (Professor Gummere's ring-dance improvisation and belief in the power and vitality of folk improvisation in general) would bar almost the whole mass of traditional ballads (such as "Lord Randal," "Edward," "Sir Patrick Spens," "Barbara Allen") from our college anthologies. Our best matter would have to be excluded. Similarly, questionable definitions of folklore and folk song have lingered till recently in textbooks and some dictionaries. Many, even before the abandonment of "peasant origin" as a fundamental conception, still retained it for folklore and folk song. For instance, even the scholarly author of the recent *Science of Folklore* (Dr. A. H. Krappe, 1930), though he distinctly gives up peasant for literary origins in his work, still defines a folk song, when opening his chapter on the subject, as a "lyric poem with melody which originated anonymously among unlettered folk in times past and remained in currency for a considerable time, as a rule for centuries." A minor dictionary of the 1930's defined a ballad as "essentially rhythmic, originating among the common people," and a folk song as "a song originating and traditional among the common people." Similarly, it describes folklore as originating and handed down among the "peasantry."

Fortunately, as regards dialect, there has never been parallel sweeping insistence on peasant origins. Such an assumption if brought forward would make no headway. Dialect has not been associated with one vague assemblage of persons, the "masses," the "folk," the "peasantry," the "common people," so often as has been folklore in general. We have anchored it to specific groups, occupational or class or racial, and to specific periods. Our vague con-



ception of the folk, folk song, folklore in general should be delimited, as for dialect, this especially when the question of folk origins as well as folk preservation is brought up.

Surely theorists and dictionary makers should know by this time that there is no mysterious national "folk," "the masses," the "common people," of the old folklorists. Dr. B. A. Botkin once emphasized this when he pointed out that all oral tradition is necessarily regional or group lore, a generalization too often overlooked. There is never one folk from the point of view of folklore, but instead many folk groups, as many as there are regional cultures or occupations or racial groups within a region. That is, groups of people, homogeneous—not of mixed races—have a body of traditions peculiar to themselves, Swedish, German, French, Spanish, Czech, Negro, Indian. And there are also groups by classes or occupations, such as J. A. Lomax's cowboys, Franz Rickaby's loggers, Joanna Colcord's seamen, George Korson's miners. Cosmopolitan folk groups have no folklore traditions or songs or common dialect. They have individual lore but not lore belonging to the whole group until the group has become homogeneous. My personal definition of folklore would omit all delimitations of origin, characterizing it simply as lore traditional among homogeneous groups. Such traditional lore may be beliefs, superstitions, tales, legends, magic rites, rituals, institutions, as generally recognized, and it should include linguistic usages too, that is, the dialect of the group, or the occupation, or the class, or the race. As said already, we are ignorant of the parentage of most of this lore when we collect it. Yet there has been overlong insistence that traditional lore must have had its start among the unlettered and that this start was oral, not printed. Folklore and folk song and the peculiarities of folk speech or dialect start in many ways, from many sources, among many classes, and in many regions, and they should no longer be defined by hypothetical anonymous beginnings among the lowly.

#### IV

As we have seen, the native English term *folklore*, or at least the first element of the compound, deserves no little examination and definition. *Dialect*, from the Greek, needs less comment. It made its appearance in the English language in Renaissance days. "E.K." commented to Gabriel Harvey in the dedication of Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar* that "Neither everywhere must old words be

stuffed in, nor the common Dialect and manner of speaking so corrupted thereby that, as in old buildings, it seems disorderly and ruinous." When he wrote this, E.K.'s *dialect* meant the standard language. When S. Clark wrote in 1740, "The lawyer's dialect would be too hard for him," his reference was to the speech of a class, class dialect. A similar instance is "the dialect of the theological society" (1805). A quotation from the middle of the nineteenth century reads, "They lay aside the *learned dialect* and reveal the unknown powers of the common speech." All these uses are standard. To be taken into account, too, is the use of the word in a wider sense as applied to a particular language in relation to the family of languages to which it belongs, as when we characterize Attic, Doric, and Aeolic Greek as dialects of Ancient Greek.

In the sense in which the Dialect Society oftenest employs the word *dialect*, and that basic in this paper, the reference is not to the standard language but chiefly to local or regional peculiarities of vocabulary or usage, those diverging from the accepted usage of the educated. Dialect is usually thought of as substandard, though it is sometimes rather hard to draw the line of demarcation between the illiterate, semiliterate, and the standard. Probably the speech of any individual may be considered dialect of some type or another, but it is better not to take individualisms into account. Until recently the Dialect Society and its publications have given little attention to the dialects of various foreign languages spoken in America, or to the dialects of class or occupation. *American Speech* (1925) established later than *Dialect Notes*, has, on the other hand, welcomed from the first material dealing with special jargons, technical, or colloquial. The characteristic vocabularies of railroad workers, telephone employees, librarians; terms used in shoe shops, beauty parlors, hotels; the peculiar language of summer employees at Yellowstone Park; the speech of foreign races in the United States, Italian, Greek, Yiddish; all these and more have had attention in its pages.

The relation of dialect to literature is a separate subject and one that can have but passing mention here. Robert Burns, poet of the Scottish vernacular, was the conspicuous inaugurator of conscious literary use of dialect in poetry, although behind him lay an attractive body of Scottish lyric verse, much of it traditional. Burns's American admirer, Whittier, did not try Yankee dialect in his poems of rural New England, though he fell now and then into

dialect rhymes, often archaic. The real American promoter of dialect in verse was James Russell Lowell, whose *Biglow Papers* are perhaps the most original of his works. There had been sporadic prose employment of it in plays and fiction of his day, but it remained for him to furnish the real impetus to its use by literary men. In the second half of the nineteenth century humorists, such as Artemus Ward, Josh Billings, P. V. Nasby, relied heavily for their effects on unlettered dialect spellings. Dialect reigned in the short stories of Mary E. Wilkins and Sarah Orne Jewett and their successors. The Indiana poet James Whitcomb Riley used to recite his dialect pieces with great prestige in tours of the country. In our own day, reliance on dialect for humorous effect has been out-rivaled by the popularity of slang, colloquialisms, and colloquial conflation of standard words, often of the "gotta," "ueta," "dincha" brand.

The question is often asked, Is slang dialect? Properly it is not, or not at least until it has lasted long enough to become lore. Slang is characteristically ephemeral, dialect not. It is its transiency that differentiates slang from dialect. Most current slang soon wears out, to be replaced by something newer. When, however, it supplies a real need, it is likely to find permanence. Often, too, it may make its way upward into accepted or semi-accepted speech. Witness instances, such as "bogus," "jazz," "toe the mark," "bosh," "poppycock," and the miner's slang, "peter out," "down to bed rock." Or, slang terms may remain in the language but remain as dialect, not making their way upward. This has been the fate of such "folk words" as "lummox," "skeezicks," or "sockdologer," transposed from "doxologer." Expressions of this type are often recorded in larger dictionaries because of their persistence; but they are not recognized as standard. On the whole, slang locutions, the clichés of the day, phrases or catchwords that spring to popularity gayly and are then worn to death, although they are of cognate character, do not belong to the dialect field. Both slang and dialect, however, have interest for those who concern themselves with the mother tongue in all its phases, and both as associated with the life of the folk.

Folklore is an expansive field of investigation and study, with extraordinary catholicity of content. In its legacies from the past belong mythology, folk tales, folk song, legends, proverbs, riddles, ritual, beliefs in witchcraft, magic, medicine. Germane to the sub-

ject also are music, festivals, games, dance, folk drama, art crafts, architecture, dress, adornment, lore about food and drink, patterns of living and thinking. Dialect, too, is an expansive field of investigation and study, but in a lesser degree. It has concern with such subjects as local and standard idiom, usage levels, changes in acceptability, substitution of other for standard forms, the relation of colloquial to literary usage, of American to British speech, non-English dialects in the United States and their influence on the vernacular. Dialect may be studied in the light of history or racial stocks, or the study may be geographical, social, professional, or technical. For all my preceding remarks regarding their close relationship, I would not like to see the two societies, the Folklore and the Dialect Society, with their now carefully partitioned fields, merged into one. The Dialect Society might indeed be a branch of the Linguistic Society as appropriately as of the Folklore Society, and the latter might occupy a niche in the Anthropological Society. It is good for each to preserve its individual angles of approach. Each has enough rich soil of its own to till, and it is ground that can be better tilled if they are kept separate.

*1941*

## NEBRASKA SNAKE LORE<sup>1</sup>

Snakes are peculiarly uncanny writhing creatures. No wonder that fantastic superstitions and tales cluster about them. They have always played a conspicuous role in various types of lore, magical, medicinal, pseudo-scientific, even Scriptural, and among advanced as well as savage peoples. The fateful serpent of the Garden of Eden was no unique figure. Older literature oral and written has told of human beings transformed into snakes, or having snake habits, or of snakes taking on human characteristics. The use of the viper in medicinal practice was mentioned in Pliny's natural history of the first century A. D. It is surprising how many curious beliefs concerning snakes, some recalling mediaeval science or the aboriginal practices of the jungle, yet abound over the United States. A display of these as they persist into our twentieth century has a certain interest, an interest that is anthropological or sociological as well as reptilian, even though made for one state only. Nebraska lore is not so abundant, certainly not so barbaric, as that found among uneducated whites and Negroes in Southern states. But more widespread bits of snake lore are to be found within its limits than would be guessed by those who have never canvassed for it.

<sup>1</sup> Read at the Fourth Annual Western Folklore Conference at the University of Denver, July 20, 1944.

My collectanea come directly from Nebraskans, mainly of course from dwellers in less settled regions and smaller towns. They are mostly personally contributed. Snakes are infrequent in cities and fewer superstitions regarding them are handed on by city dwellers. The entries in the following pages have been supplied by both lettered and less lettered contributors. They are reproduced verbatim, or, as nearly as may be, in the words of the informants. They are as complete as I could make them but can hardly be exhaustive. The folklore field, as well known, is an ever-shifting one, with variants springing up constantly and new matter entering.

The population of Nebraska is mixed, though basically from the British Isles. Pioneers came to the Middle West from many States, bringing with them traditional matter from their old homes. They were joined by immigrants from Old World peoples such as the Scandinavian, German, Dutch, Bohemian. Relevant evidence may sometimes be recorded but it would be futile to attempt to track the origins and wanderings of the mass of superstitions, beliefs, and sayings yet existent in the State.

As regards the attitudes toward their lore of Nebraska informants, more of it is accepted than one might think; much of it is handed on with complete faith in it. A surprising number of the strange cures reported are in actual use in certain regions or in certain families. But a majority of the superstitions or sayings are repeated by skeptics who hand them on but look upon them as mirth-provoking and preposterous.

My concern has been to present traditional Nebraska snake lore and that only. Manufactured "tall tales" about snakes, yarns by humorists or journalists, or evolved in competitive narration I have not tried to collect, though no doubt many of these exist. Nor have I tried to include the lore of foreign groups in Nebraska, such as Mexican, German, Swedish, Dutch, preserved by them in, or translated from, their native languages. And I have not tried to include Negro lore. It has its special interest and is often far more colorful than that of the white population. But other states have far larger Negro populations than Nebraska and would afford better hunting ground. Nebraska Indian lore, too, is a separate subject and deserves separate attention.

Special acknowledgment of indebtedness should go to my colleague, Dr. Ruth Odell, to Pauline Black Holtrop and Louise Snapp when graduate students, to Margaret Cannell of the Agricultural

College staff, to successive generations of undergraduate students attending the University of Nebraska, and to many pioneer residents of the State and their descendants. I am also indebted to Richard B. Loomis of Lincoln, who is well versed in snake life and snake ways and who supplied many factual details.

#### SNAKES AND CURES

The most striking section of Nebraska snake lore has to do with the curative powers associated with snakes, notably the rattlesnake. It was with this snake, naturally enough, that the prairie pioneer was most concerned. For this he most needed remedies, and he found them in what was most available, such as poultices of animal grease or lard or of prairie plants. The medical use of snakes now surviving, it is to be hoped, for civilized countries only in folklore, can be traced as far back as the elder Pliny and the Greek physician Pedacius Dioscorides in Europe and the founders of Chinese medicine in Asia. The old and widely established prescription of remedies having a revolting smell or taste or revolting associations, this lasting even into modern times, is supposed to have had its origin in the effort to get together nauseous messes that would drive from the soul of primitive man a devil that had slipped in, perhaps when his mouth was open when he slept. Hence were handed down such curatives as angleworm oil, tincture of frog, grease of a black dog, hog's hoof tea, asafoetida, tar, bitters, and the use of the toad and of the viper. That belief in the medical value of the viper persisted in common credence is shown by statements such as the following from an advertisement in Addison and Steele's *The Spectator* of eighteenth-century England:

Whereas the Viper has been a medicine approv'd by Physicians of all nations; there is now prepar'd the Volatil Compound of it, a preparation altogether new . . . the most Sovereign Remedy against all Faintings, Swoonings, Lowness of Spirits, Vapours, etc.

The Volatil Compound of Viper was used no doubt by ladies and gentlemen in the days of Pope and Swift. In the Middle West the viper has been replaced by the rattlesnake as a curative agent.

Remarkable as are some of the Nebraska cures supposed to be efficacious, there are of course many that are just as remarkable, or yet more so, in other states or in the Old World, from which most of our lore except for the prairie cures is a legacy.

## CURATIVE POWERS

Application of a snakeskin will cure a headache.<sup>1</sup>

A snakeskin is good for rheumatism.

Put a piece of snakeskin in your pocket to cure rheumatism.

A snakeskin around the head will cure fever.

Rattlesnake rattles will cure a headache if held against the head.

Carry rattlesnake rattles in your hatband to cure headache.

Wear the rattles of a rattlesnake in your hat to cure rheumatism.

Let the baby chew rattlesnake rattles to help his teeth through.

Put a rattlesnake rattle in a tobacco bag and hang the bag around a child's neck during teething.

When a baby is fretful while teething, string three large rattles of a rattlesnake on a red cord and put it around the child's neck. Do not remove the rattle until the child is through teething.

A snake head bound on a bruise will effect a cure.

The bite of a rattlesnake will cure tuberculosis.

The warm intestines of a rattlesnake are especially curative for pneumonia.

Wrap a snake around the neck and allow it to creep off and a goiter will disappear.

Snake oil, like the eighteenth-century Volatil Compound of Viper, served or serves as a cure-all. Itinerant medicine peddlers appeared in Omaha and elsewhere as late as the 1930's selling snake oil, supposedly from Indian formulas: "Indian Snake Oil will cure everything but is especially good for rheumatism and rejuvenation."

## CURES FOR SNAKE BITES

You must kill the snake if its bite is to be healed.

To cure a snake bite cut the snake to bits and bind it on the wound.

To cure a snake bite cut the snake in half and bind it on the wound.

Kill the snake, cut it, and apply the pieces on the wound.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Pauline Black Holtrop, "Nebraska Folk Cures," *University of Nebraska Studies in Language, Literature and Criticism*, No. 15, 1935, p. 32, testifies that "A man from Thomas County who was bitten by a rattlesnake immediately cut off the snake's head and then split open its body, cutting it into three-inch pieces. These he applied at once to the wound, discarding each piece as it became saturated with the poison. The snake was not used because of any charm that the man associated with it but as a poultice in an emergency." Roger V. Shumate of the University of Nebraska says he was told by a man living near Lincoln that when a mule he was riding was bitten by a rattlesnake he was lucky enough to kill the



If a snake bites you, kill the snake and cut it into pieces and you will not be poisoned.

For a rattlesnake bite, in an emergency, beat cockleburrs to a pulp and apply a poultice.

Cut the outside prickles off the cactus found in the Sand Hills and mash the inside of the plant and apply it to the bite as a poultice. Keep it moist with water and change it as often as it becomes warm.

Mash the roots of the milkweed and apply to a rattlesnake bite. Also give the bitten person the milk internally.

Make a poultice of tansy boiled in milk.

Apply fresh cow manure to a snake bite.

A snakeskin will draw the poison from a rattlesnake bite.

Apply hog lard to the wound. Heat the lard and have the patient drink all he can.

Apply a mixture of turpentine and gunpowder to a rattlesnake bite to cure it.

Soak the bite in coal oil for a long time.

Pack mud on a rattlesnake bite to cure it.

Bury the part of the body bitten by the snake in the ground and soak the earth with sweet milk.

Whiskey taken internally is a popular snakebite remedy:

"Drink all the whiskey you can, the more the better."

Tobacco juice will cure a snake bite. Tobacco served on the whole as the most popular poultice for a snake bite.<sup>3</sup>

Puncture the skin around the bite with the sharp points of the soapweed to let the poison run out.

Keep jabbing the swollen places with a sharp knife until the black blood and water come out. This will be the poison.

Scarify the flesh as deeply as the fangs went and make at least two incisions. Then apply table salt.

Apply the warm flesh of an animal, especially the intestines, to draw out the poison.

snake. Next he cut it up (it must be the same snake), applied pieces to the bite, and the mule was cured. This was vouched for as a real happening.

<sup>3</sup> Mrs. Holtrop also reported that the late Captain Lute North of Columbus, Nebraska, a resident of the State since 1856 and a well-known personage in his region, told of a man he once saw cured of a rattlesnake bite by the application of tobacco. Another man chewed quantities of it and kept the hand well-poulticed. The man who was bitten recovered from the bite but the man who chewed tobacco for the poultice became very ill.

Split a live chicken and place on the snake bite to draw out the poison.

If there are any chickens available, cut one open either after it has been killed or while it is still alive, and put it over the snake bite. Before long the chicken will be all green from the poison which it has drawn out. It takes nearly a dozen chickens to draw all the poison from the wound.

Kill an animal, preferably a cow, and slit a hole in the abdomen. Bury the bitten area in the middle of the animal. Leave it there until the carcass becomes cold and then remove. The poison from the bite will be drawn out.

When a horse is bitten by a rattler take a sharp knife and scarify the wound until it bleeds freely. Cut the tips from five or six blades of soapweed, stick them all around the wound and leave them for 24 hours.

Drench a bitten animal with warm lard out of a bottle to cure a snake bite.

The familiar advice "When bitten by a snake suck the wound and spit out the blood and saliva" is the soundest of the folk cures reported and that reported most frequently. It is recommended in the manual for Boy Scouts.<sup>4</sup>

#### WEATHER SIGNS

Some persons seem to think that snakes may serve as rain-making charms, or may contribute to the control of rain. Sometimes those who pass farms observe dead snakes hung on bushes, fences, or barns, apparently as rain-making agents.

When a snake is killed and hung up it will rain. The higher the snake is hung the harder it will rain.

If you hang a snake on the fence it will bring rain.

If you hang a snake on the fence it will rain until it is taken off.

If a snake is hung on a fence on its back it is a sign of rain.

It is a sign of fair weather the next day if a snake lies on its back.

<sup>4</sup> Madge E. Pickard and R. Carlyle Buley, *The Midwest Pioneer, His Ills, Cures, and Doctors*, Crawfordsville, Indiana, 1945, note no instances of the use of snakes as curatives but say of snake bites (p. 42): "Snake bites offered a wide choice of remedies, from white plantain boiled in milk, ash bark tea, alum water, or whiskey internally applied, to incisions and applications of salt and gunpowder, black ash leaves, crushed garlic juice, or salt and tobacco."

If a snake lies on its back it is a sign of rain.

It is a sign of clear weather if a snake lies on its back in its death throes.

If a snake leaves the water for higher ground it will rain.

If snakes or toads are around dwellings it is a sign of stormy weather.

If frogs or snakes come about the house it will rain the next day.

If snakes cross the road in unusual numbers it will rain.

Snakes crossing your path mean a long drouth. Snakes migrate to wet regions.

If when tossed up a snake alights on its back, it will rain. If it does not alight on its back do not expect rain.

Snakes waken when they hear thunder.

Warm spring weather is sometimes referred to as "snake time."

#### LUCK

##### *Good Luck*

It is good luck to kill the first snake you see in the spring.

It is good luck not to kill the first snake you see in the spring.

Bull snakes in the yard bring good luck.

Keep a bull snake in the yard for good luck. Bull snakes are never to be killed.

Kill a snake when you see one and you will have good luck.

The rattles of a rattlesnake will bring good luck.

If you kill a rattlesnake keep the rattles for good luck.

Rattles carried around the neck bring good luck.

Rattles carried anywhere bring good luck.

##### *Bad Luck*

Expect to have bad luck if a snake crosses your path.

It is very bad luck if a rattlesnake crosses your path.

It means bad luck if you kill a snake.

You will have bad luck if you do not kill the first snake you see in the spring.

"Bull snakes climbing trees mean bad luck."

#### DREAMS

If you dream of a snake it is a sign that a friend is betraying you.  
Dream that a snake bites you and you will hear of the death of a friend.

Snakes in dreams signify enemies.

To dream of a snake you do not kill means that you have an active enemy. If in your dream you kill the snake you will become friends with your enemy.

If in your dream you kill the snake that has bitten you, you will conquer your enemy. If the snake gets away you will be conquered.

Dream that a snake bites you and you will have trouble with a friend.

If you dream of a snake you will hear of the death of a friend.

If you dream of snakes you will get money the next day.

If you tell the snake dream, you will quarrel with the person to whom you told it.

Report a dream about a snake and you will quarrel with some one.

#### PREVENTIVES

A snake will not cross over a rope, especially a horsehair rope.

Make a horsehair circle or ring to keep snakes away for they will not cross it.

Campers in a rattlesnake country coil a horsehair rope about them at night to keep snakes away. This practice is said to be still relied on occasionally. "A rattlesnake has been known, however, to squirt his poison over the rope upon the sleeper." (Horsehair rope around a person is not reliable protection. If a snake is placed inside a coil of rope it promptly crawls over it. But, to some extent, snakes do avoid crawling over objects, or crawling uphill.)

Keep hogs on a farm to drive away snakes. Hogs will kill rattlesnakes.

If you live in the rattlesnake region, keep hogs on the farm, as the hogs will smell out the rattlesnakes and kill them. "This is believed by many farmers." (Hogs and other animals, as deer, do kill a great number of snakes.)

Kill and cut to pieces a snake that bites you and you will not be poisoned.

Carry a rattlesnake's rattle in your pocket and it will prevent small pox.

If you do not kill the first snake of the season your enemies will torment you.

## SNAKES AND ANIMALS, BIRDS, INSECTS, PLANTS

Hogs will kill snakes. Thus they keep snakes away from farm buildings. (See under Preventives.)

If there are hogs on the farm all the rattlesnakes will leave, as the hogs can smell out the rattlesnakes and kill them. "This is believed by many farmers."

A cat will warn you that a snake is around, for it will sit unmoved and watch a snake until some one comes to kill it.

A dog bitten by a rattlesnake will crawl into a mud hole and stay there for a time to draw out the poison.

If a cow goes dry it is because a "milk snake" has sucked it. One contributor testified that "a milk snake was seen sucking a cow, in Pennsylvania, while the cow was in its stall. This, I believe, is not a superstition." ("Milk snakes" are of no great height, have small teeth that no cow would tolerate, do not carry milk stools, and have never been known to drink milk.)

Snakes and prairie dogs are amicable companions.

A snake and a prairie dog will lie down together amicably in the same burrow.

Snakes and prairie dogs and owls are supposed to live amicably together in their holes on clay banks. (Snakes inhabit prairie dog burrows but not in amicable companionship. Sometimes they do so to eat the young of a prairie dog, or baby owls. Sometimes also for hibernation.)

"Snake doctors" or "snake feeders," i.e., dragon flies, warn snakes of danger.

So long as the head of the snake remains, a "snake doctor" can renew a dead snake's vitality.

There are always snakes close to "snake flowers." "These are wild iris," a contributor suggested; but other plants go by the name, as viper's bugloss, white dead-nettle, stichwort, starflower, white campion.

## SNAKE DEATH

If you kill a snake it will not die until sundown.

If you kill a snake it will not die until sunrise.

If you kill a snake it will move (wiggle, wriggle) its tail until sundown. One contributor commented that he found by testing it that this is not true. Another reported that "It is true that if

you cut a snake's tail off close to the head, it will be a long time before the body becomes motionless." (It retains motion and activity for some time, if stimulated.)

A snake cut in pieces will come together again.

If you cut a snake in two pieces the two pieces will get together and crawl away.

Cut a snake in two and, no matter where the two parts are, the head will go back, find the tail, and attach itself to the tail.

Some snakes if struck will break into pieces and later join into entirety again. Such snakes are called "glass snakes." (The "glass snake" is actually a lizard. Two-thirds of its length is usually a brittle tail. It can generate a new tail which looks as if it was put on. But it cannot get its old tail back.)

If any vitality yet remains in a snake, the "snake doctor" (dragon fly) can bring it to life again.

If you kill a rattlesnake and cut it into two parts, young will crawl out, because the mother snake eats her young for their protection. (There is no authentic testimony that a mother snake eats her young, or swallows them for their protection, or that in either case they remain alive.)

Poisonous snakes follow the trail of their killed mates, perhaps to avenge them.

A bull snake will kill a rattlesnake but will die itself of the poison.

A rattlesnake will bite itself and die if surrounded by cactus thorns by a road runner. (A variety of bird noted for running at great speed. Road runners sometimes hang up on cactus snakes and lizards they kill. Road runners are not found in Nebraska.)

#### HABITS AND CHARACTERISTICS

Some snakes have stingers at the end of their tails. They sting instead of bite.

A rattlesnake will strike twice its length.

A snake eats but once a month. (Snakes eat about every week, or whenever their last meal is digested.)

Poisonous snakes are born alive. "Other snakes are hatched from eggs." (Poisonous snakes are born alive, except the coral snake from the Southeast United States.)

The shape of a snake's head is supposed to determine whether or not it is poisonous.

The number of its rattles is an indication of the years of age of a rattlesnake. (The number is an indication of the snake's sheddings, which is from one to four times a year. When a rattler sheds, it gets a new segment or rattle on its tail.)

A rattlesnake does not poison itself when it strikes itself. (It poisons other rattlers but not itself.)

Snakes will not bite when they are in the water. (They will bite but not strike.)

Once a snake strikes, its fangs drop out and it cannot bite until they grow in again. (Partly true. Snakes have a series of new teeth in different stages of development beside each tooth. When a tooth is lost, one of the successional series takes its place. They shed their fangs when they shed their skin, and at fairly regular intervals.)

Rattlesnakes lay eggs. (True for most species of snakes.)

A rattlesnake will never strike a small child. "Dad, when a small child, played with one." <sup>5</sup>

A rattlesnake will not strike a person from the rear. "To go fishing once we had to cross a prairie dog town which, as are all such towns, was infested with rattlesnakes and owls. To protect ourselves we tied a half of stovepipe on the front of our legs and walked safely through, relying on the saying that the snake would not strike after we had passed.

A hoop snake will swallow its tail and roll down hill.

If when rolling down hill a hoopsnake releases its tail and strikes its stinger into a tree, the tree will die.

If the hoopsnake while rolling down a hill rolls into any living thing, the thing will die.

<sup>5</sup> Compare, Pickard and Buley, *The Midwest Pioneer*, etc., p. 78: "About the only thing the child did not have to worry about was snake bite, for that just naturally could not happen to him until he was seven years old. Then, when bitten, if he did not approve of good liquor or gunpowder, he could draw on a toad to draw out the poison. If the toad died another was tied on. When the toad lived all the poison was out. Carrying an onion in the pocket provided insurance against snake bite, but if one were bitten, it was necessary for him to eat the heart of the offending reptile if he would gain further immunity. Spitting into the mouth of the snake would kill it and prevent serious harm, or the curse of Adam ("God created everything and it was good; save thou alone, snake, are cursed; cursed shalt thou be and thy poison") might be put upon it, and then it would sneak away and die of shame."

"Whoopsnakes (*sic*) are so poisonous that a tree will die if they bite it."

Some snakes are supposed to be able to enter a hen house and suck eggs.

Snakes go blind during dog-days. (Now usually counted from July 3 to July 11.)

Snakes go blind in the late part of summer.

Rattlesnakes do not bite and poison people during the months of fall. They are supposed to bite only during the spring, when they shed their skin and are blind. (Rattlesnakes do go blind when they shed their skin, which is when it becomes too tight for the growing body beneath. This is usually from four to six times a year, depending on the food supply. It may be in spring, summer, or fall.)

A side winder will kill any living thing it touches.

A blue racer will chase you if you run from it but will flee if you turn on it.

Blue racers will chase you. If you cut them into pieces they will join together again. (Blue racers will follow, not chase a person. The popular explanation is that they do so from "curiosity.")

Snakes have hypnotic powers. They are able to hypnotize small game, as birds, rabbits, frogs. Some believe that they can hypnotize human beings. "I have been hypnotized by a large bull snake in the field," one contributor testified. Perhaps this belief is to be explained by the fact that the victims are overcome by fear. (W. G. Simms, *The Yemassee*, 1835, describes in vivid detail, Chapter XX, the hypnotizing of his heroine, Bess Matthews, by a rattlesnake.)

When frightened, some species of snake swallow their young to protect them. (This may be partly true, but the later release of them and the "protection" are legendary.)<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> John J. Strecker ("Reptile Myths in Northwestern Louisiana," *Publications of the Texas Folk-Lore Society* IV, 1925, 42-52, also "Reptiles of the South and Southwest in Folk-Lore," V, 1926, 66, and his "Dragons and Other Reptiles Real and Imaginary," *Baylor University Contributions to Folk-Lore*, No. 3, 1929, 66) lists leading snake myths, mostly from Negro sources. He includes the myth of the coach or whip snake which whips its victims with its tail, the joint snake which breaks into pieces when struck, the hoop snake which rolls, the stinging snake, the milk snake, the thunder snake (with legs) and others. He raises the question whether snakes ever really swallow their young and seems to hold that this is another snake myth and catalogues it as such.



## SAYINGS

Animal reference always looms large in proverbial lore, especially as a source of comparison applicable to human beings. Domesticated animals play a prominent part, such as the pig, hog, mule, ox, lamb, hare, horse. So do birds, insects, and the snake. Snake similes, used for disparagement, have a conspicuous place.<sup>7</sup>

As cold as a snake.

As crooked as a snake.

As deadly as a cobra.

As poisonous as a snake.

As treacherous as a snake.

Like a snake in the grass.

Hiss like a snake.

Lower than a snake's belly.

Madder than snakes in haying.

Nourish a viper in the bosom.

If it was a snake it would have bit you.

Sew on Friday and you'll get snakes in the house.

## MISCELLANEOUS

Pull out a human hair, place it in a glass of water, and it will turn into a snake within two weeks.

Pull out a horse hair and place it in a rain barrel and in two weeks it will turn into a snake. (I have heard many persons affirm this with unshaken conviction. Perhaps the belief has its basis in some chemical action of the hair during the two weeks of its immersion. There is a so-called "hair snake," but it is really a worm. It frequently appears in water or near water plants but it does not come from human hair or horse hair.)

If you suck the poison from a wound from a snake bite, your teeth will fall out. (Those who have bleeding gums when they suck poison from a wound are definitely likely to find their teeth loosening.)

Stepping on a dead snake will make sores break out on your fingers.

Stepping on a dead snake will make sores break out on your feet.

A bull snake is believed to kill rattlesnakes.

<sup>7</sup> See Louise Snapp, *Proverbial Lore in Nebraska*, *University of Nebraska Studies in Language, Literature, and Criticism*, No. 13. 1933.

A bull snake will kill a rattlesnake but will die itself of the poison. A bull snake will tease a rattler until the rattler strikes at him. The bull snake dodges. The rattler misses him and on the return will hit and poison himself. (Mistaken identity may explain this belief. Bull snakes do not kill rattlesnakes but king snakes do kill other snakes. There is some resemblance between king snakes and rattlesnakes.)

Two snakes can each grab the other's tail and swallow it until both snakes disappear.

"Keep the rattles from a rattler in a violin and it will play better. My grandfather had such a violin." (Compare, "The town fiddler practiced there with snake rattles in his violin to make the tone clearer . . .". *The Last of the Bad Men*, a biography of Tom Horne by Jay Monaghan, 1946, p. 43.)

A few contributions of strange lore imported into Nebraska, coming from groups not taken into account in the preceding pages, are:

"Snakes are the abiding place of devils. You cannot kill them except with some instrument in the form of a cross." (From a German family arriving in Nebraska in the 1920's.)

"A rattlesnake having a poison sac in its mouth must remove it to drink, in order to keep from poisoning itself. If you steal the sac the snake goes wild with anger and dashes itself against the rocks." (Told as fact by a Mexican from San Antonio.)

"To keep Negroes wearing their shoes they are told that snakes will bore a hole in their feet to get in the blood stream and consume the blood, killing the person." (Told by a contributor in Lincoln, Nebraska.)

The searcher for curious beliefs and survivals finds them naturally enough in the greatest numbers in the communities that are farthest behind our contemporary civilization and among the classes having least sophistication. Illiteracy fosters their vitality. The less well-read a person is, the larger the number of superstitions he cherishes, the more barbaric his superstitions, and the greater his credulity. That Nebraska superstitions are on the whole relatively mild may be illustrated by the following from other States:

Snake dust, made by pulverizing a dried snake, put into a person's food will grow to full-sized reptiles within that person.

The blood of a blacksnake, taken warm with whiskey will enable you to do more work than anyone else.

Eat the brains of a snake or rat to bring skill in conjuring.

Take a dried one-eyed toad, a dried lizard, the little finger of a person who committed suicide, the wings of a bat, the eyes of a cat, the liver of an owl, and reduce all to a powder. Then cut up into fine pieces a lock of hair from a dead (natural) child, and mix it with the powder. Make a bag of a piece of sheet that has been used as a shroud, put all the material into it and put it into the pillow of the intended victim when nobody is aware of your action. A few feathers run through the top will expedite matters.<sup>8</sup>

1946

<sup>8</sup> This complicated voodoo conjuring charm is from New Orleans. See H. M. Wiltse, *Journal of American Folklore*, XIII (1900), 211. For the preceding bits of lore, see Newbell Niles Puckett, *Folk Beliefs of the Southern Negro* (1926), 222, 322.

## THE NEBRASKA LEGEND OF WEeping WATER<sup>1</sup>

### LORE OF STREAMS AND LAKES ARISING FROM TEARS

The small Nebraska stream known as the Weeping Water, *L'Eau qui pleure* of early French explorers and traders, arises in Cass County in southeastern Nebraska, passes through the towns of Weeping Water and Nehawka, and flows into the Missouri between Plattsmouth and Nebraska City. Somewhat too large for a creek, though possibly larger in an earlier day, it is not large enough to be termed a river. Its name is poetic and suggestive and a legend now well established has become associated with it. Tales of bodies of water originating from tears, as in the Nebraska story, are far from unusual in folklore. A few are recorded from Greek mythology.<sup>2</sup> In an Irish tale a father sheds "three drops of grief" for his dead son and these become three lochs. In another Irish tale a king's daughter died of shame and her foster mother's tears made Loch Gile.<sup>3</sup> In a third Irish tale a saint's tears produced a fountain.<sup>4</sup> In Oceanic tradition the mother of a Maori hero deity is

<sup>1</sup> Read at the Western Folklore Conference at the University of Denver, July 10, 1947.

<sup>2</sup> W. S. Fox, *Greek and Roman Mythology*, "The Mythology of All Races" (Boston, 1916), I, 257.

<sup>3</sup> J. R. McCulloch, *Celtic Mythology*, "The Mythology of All Races" (Boston, 1918), III, 135.

<sup>4</sup> Charles Plummer, *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae* (Oxford, 1910), p. cl; and Rev. W. J. Rees, *Lives of the Cambro-British Saints* (1853), p. 481.

said to have wept at the action of her son, her tears falling to earth and flooding it, thus overwhelming all men.<sup>5</sup> An instance in the Finnish *Kalevala* tells how the mother of the beautiful Aino weeps about her daughter's fate and her tears flow on and ever.

As the tear drops fall and mingle  
Form they streamlets three in number,  
And their source the mother's eyelids,  
Streamlets formed from pearly tear-drops,  
And each streamlet larger growing  
Soon became a raging torrent. . . .<sup>6</sup>

In the mythology of the North American Indians there are examples of bodies of water originating from tears. Professor Stith Thompson's *Tales of the North American Indians*<sup>7</sup> presents stories of floods caused by tears, usually the tears of a disappointed suitor or a jealous husband. In his *The Folk Tale* Professor Thompson writes:

As for stories of deluges, it is often extremely hard to tell whether we are dealing with an aboriginal idea or with some modification of the tale of Noah as learned from missionaries or other Europeans. Of the flood tales which have the appearance of being aboriginal there are good examples in every part of the continent. Sometimes these are obviously related to each other, and sometimes they are clearly independent stories, perhaps frequently the reflection of some actual catastrophe. Interesting causes for these floods are sometimes related. Rather widespread is the notion that the flood is caused by tears, often those of a disappointed suitor. This concept is found with great frequency among the Plateau tribes and on the North Pacific Coast, and even over into Siberia. Its distribution shows that this is a very definite tradition, obviously disseminating from some center, probably the North Pacific Coast.<sup>8</sup>

The so-called Nebraska Legend of Weeping Water has existed in printed and oral form for at least eight decades. Many questions arise concerning it. How did it start? Among Indians or white men? If the latter, were they French or English? How old is it? Who handed it on? How fixed is its form? These questions are of interest, especially to Nebraskans, whether final answers may be arrived at or not. The Nebraska legend of a stream having its origin

<sup>5</sup> R. B. Dixon, *Oceanic Mythology*, "The Mythology of All Races" (Boston, 1916) IX, 38.

<sup>6</sup> *The Kalevala: The Epic Poem of Finland*, translated by John Martin Crawford (Cincinnati, 1898); rune 4: "The Fate of Aino."

<sup>7</sup> (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1929), p. 287, n. 57b.

<sup>8</sup> Stith Thompson, *The Folk Tale* (New York, 1947), p. 313.

in tears seems unique in that the cause of lamentation is a massacre resulting in the extinction of two warring groups. There is a frustrated suitor present in some forms of this legend; but the basic tragedy is not his, although he too is slain. The suitor seems to have been a literary addition.

#### THE NEBRASKA LEGEND OF WEEPING WATER

The first printed mention of the Weeping Water tale occurs, so far as may be determined, in a poem "The Weeping Water," by Professor Orsamus Charles Dake, the first professor of English Literature at the University of Nebraska.<sup>9</sup> Professor Dake was born at Portage in Livingston County, New York, was graduated at Madison University, Hamilton, New York, and became among other things a teacher, editor, and ordained clergyman. In 1863 he organized Brownell Hall, Omaha, a girls' school. In 1865 he went to Fremont, where he organized a church. He was a professor at the University of Nebraska, which was founded in 1869, from 1871 until his death in 1875. He published a small volume of 165 pages entitled *Nebraska Legends and Other Poems* in 1871.<sup>10</sup> The initial poem, about 800 lines of blank verse, is "The Weeping Water." Preceding the poem, printed on the page opposite the opening lines, is the following brief statement of the legend which the author says in his preface is one of the two legends he "developed."

The Omaha and Otoe Indians, being at war, chanced to meet on their common hunting ground south of the Platte River in Nebraska. A fierce battle ensued, in which all the male warriors of both tribes being slain, the women and children came upon the battle-field and sat down and wept. From the fountain of their tears arose and ever flows the little stream known as the Ne-hawka or the Weeping Water.

Dake's preface, dated 1870, states:

In the development of the two Nebraska legends I have treated my Indian characters as noble, and possessed of true sentiment. A brutal savage is not a poetical subject, and, except under rare conditions, has no business in poetry. If the Indian, like his human brethren of more favorable opportunities, has his worse side, he also has his better. Until corrupted by intercourse with the

<sup>9</sup> A. C. Edmunds, *Nebraskans: Pen Sketches with Photographs* (Lincoln, 1871), pp. 297-300; also account by A. E. Sheldon, *Nebraska History*, VI (April-June, 1923), 42-44. Dake's poem is reprinted in full in this issue.

<sup>10</sup> (New York: Pott and Amery, Cooper Union, 1871.)

whites, his nature is simple, affectionate, childlike. Certainly he is no worse than the old pagan Greeks of Homer and the dramatists, who were separated into little tribes, forever at war, and whose common occupation was the sacking of towns and the carrying off of defenceless women for concubines. Every inducement, therefore, that could urge an ancient poet to portray pre-historic peoples as chivalrous and of a sustained dignity should impel a writer of today to do likewise. Elemental poetic conditions do not change.

These statements imply that Professor Dake knew an already existent legend of the stream. The next poem in the little volume, "The Raw Hide," was founded on a mid-century incident often mentioned as historic,<sup>11</sup> supposed to have taken place in Nebraska, and now of legendary associations.

The initial poem reflects the author's Homeric knowledge and stimulus and his religious training. On the whole "The Weeping Water" does credit to Nebraska's pioneer professor of English literature. Lofty speeches of the Homeric and Virgilian type take the place of dialogue, and the narrative is studded with elaborated similes in the manner of the classic epics.<sup>12</sup> The author supplies a love story, not mentioned in his prefatory summary, of the Otoe youth Sananona and Nacoumah, the daughter of the Omaha chief, Watonashie. When their union is forbidden by the Otoe chief

<sup>11</sup> The story of the flaying of a white man by Indians after his casual shooting of an Indian woman has been told with variations since Gold Rush days. It is narrated as fact not legend in John B. Dunbar's "The Pawnee Indians," *Magazine of American History*, IV (April, 1880), 257, and by Captain R. W. Hazen, *History of the Pawnee Indians* (1893), pp. 29-31. The victim is said by Hazen to have been Seth Estabrook, one of a band of gold seekers headed for California in 1850. It was termed historical also by W. O. Dodge of Fremont (*Omaha World-Herald*, October 19, 1925) and by E. W. Smith of Hooper and J. E. Mathews of Fairmont (*Lincoln State Journal*, March 19, 1926). Dr. Cass Barnes in his *The Sod House* (1930), p. 27, foreword by A. E. Sheldon, is more doubtful of its authenticity. The site of the incident is said by all these persons to be Rawhide Creek just east of Fremont. The magazine *Nebraska History* (VI [1923], 121), prints an account by H. J. Miller who testifies that the incident occurred on the Little Blue River in 1858. He says his account was written for Mrs. Miller by Mr. Long, a member of the small party involved, which was on its way to Pike's Peak. In the same magazine (XIV [July-September, 1933], 190), Adam William Schoup gives the location of the happening as near Lodge Pole and says it took place in connection with a train of about 200 going west on the Oregon Trail. Perhaps, like the scalping of white men, such an incident could have taken place anywhere in Indian days. Whether or not the tale has historic basis, it is widespread and not only among Nebraskans. The same tale is told about the naming of Rawhide Creek near Torrington, Wyoming, and of many other places west of the Missouri River. A. E. Sheldon suggests in his foreword to Dr. Barnes's book that it might have been told so widely and so often in order to forestall overt acts by thoughtless white men passing through regions occupied by Indian tribes.

<sup>12</sup> Examples are the lines beginning: "As when an eagle whets his murderous

Shosguscan, the spirited Sananona leaves his tribe to go among the Omaha. It is this situation that brings on the tribal conflict ending in the destruction of the warriors of both sides. When all is over, the bereaved women steal across the battlefield searching for their husbands, brothers, sons.

They sat them down through lingering painful hours  
Of the dim night, and, without utterance, wept. . .  
But all the tears of children and of wives,  
In a green hollow of the lonely hills  
He gathered in a fountain, that the sun  
Dries not in summer heats, but crystal pure  
O'erbrims and murmurs through the changing years.  
Forever on it flows, that gentle stream,  
Fountained by tears, and glides among the hills—  
Ne-hawka—in a valley of its own. . . .  
Until, at length, it lingers at the marge  
Of the untamable Missouri flood. . . .

The poem is ambitious and it commands respect as pioneer Nebraska verse; but it tells an unbelievable event in an imitative outmoded way.

The next appearance of the legend seems to be in a *History of Nebraska*<sup>13</sup> published by A. T. Andreas twelve years after Dake's book. In his account of the town of Weeping Water the author includes a version of the legend which echoes the manner of Dake's poem and with a basic love story. But the narratives are not identical. It is as though the historian knew a somewhat different form of the story. Of course it is not to be expected that versions of legends handed down will always agree as to persons, groups, and circumstances involved. The Andreas *History* says:

There is an Indian tradition that somewhere near the source of the river now known as the Weeping Water, there once dwelt a powerful but peaceful tribe, governed by sound laws, ruled over by a chief as mild tempered as he was valorous, whose warriors were as straight as their own arrows, as strong and fleet as the horses they rode, whose maidens were lithe and lovely, their beauty far exceeding that possessed by any of the surrounding tribes. And

beak . . ."; "As when along some blown Alaskan vale a herd of Caribou drags forth its length . . ." Too modern for the theme is:

". . . As one  
Who, whirling through the country by a train  
That flies the track and plunges down the steep,  
Picks himself out from shattered heaps of cars  
And smutched and mangled bodies of the dead. . . ."

<sup>13</sup> (Chicago, 1882), p. 509.



it is further said that the fairest of these maidens was the chief's daughter—so fair that she captivated the heart and brain of the ruler of a still more powerful tribe upon the west, who asked her father for her, was refused, and finally succeeded in abducting the maiden while she was bathing with her companions in the deep still lake adjacent to the village.

Pursuit was made, the lodges being left in charge of the women and the infirm. The chase was a long and hard one, and the result was most disastrous, every man of the pursuers being killed in the fight that followed. For three long days and nights those who had been left at the village waited, then started out in search of their fathers, husbands, and lovers, to find them dead upon the plains, and, finding them, to weep so long that their falling tears formed a stream that still exists—Nehawka—the weeping water.

One difference between the Andreas and the Dake story is that the tribes and persons are not named in the Andreas version. And the young hero is the chief of his tribe, as though Dake's Sananona and Shosguscan are merged into one character. Another difference is that the youthful chief abducts the daughter of the chief of the rival tribe instead of leaving his own tribe.

I shall mention here but two of the many brief contemporary oral accounts I have collected.

The most elaborate and detailed account of the legend is that of Professor J. C. Lindberg of the State College at Aberdeen, South Dakota. It is too long to be quoted in full. There is no love story as in the Dake and Andreas versions. Each of two hostile tribes claims territory in the southeastern Nebraska region as its ancestral hunting grounds. Upon the same night each tribe planned to surprise and overpower the other. At early dawn each found itself face to face with the enemy. Deadly and sustained conflict resulted in the annihilation of one of the tribes and only a handful of the other remained to tell the story. Those left in camp held a council and decided to go *en masse* to bury their dead.

There were tears, many tears. After they had buried their dead another council was held at which it was decided that each year upon the anniversary of the battle the whole tribe should journey to the scene of the slaughter and lament their dead heroes. This custom was dutifully kept up till the white man appeared upon the scene and pushed the Indians farther west. But meanwhile a great many tears had been poured out, so many, indeed, that a little stream was formed and made its way down the valley. The bed of the stream is very uneven and broken by many little falls and because of this (as well as from the origin of the stream) there is a constant murmuring and complaining and so it was christened the Weeping Water. It was in these complaints that the water heard the following voice.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> *Nebraska History*, V (1922), 57-59.

A poem of three 8-line stanzas, evidently of Professor Lindberg's own composition, follows, of which more will be said later.

The latest printed version I shall quote appeared in the *Nebraska History* magazine in 1936, a prize essay by Roberta Williams of Nebraska City.<sup>15</sup> The essay concerns the disappearance of the old town of Wyoming, near the Weeping Water. It was founded in 1855, and when it had lost importance changed its name in 1882 to Dresden. Under the sidehead "Indian Legend" Miss Williams tells that the Indian legend gave the name to the stream and seems to imply that it was in general circulation.

Doubtless, too, the Weeping Water flows over its rocky bed with the same mournful sound that the two early explorers [Lewis and Clark] heard. There is a legend that two Indian tribes met in battle several miles above the point where Wyoming was later to be, and that nearly all the warriors were killed. The Indian maidens shed so many tears for their lost braves that it started a tiny stream. Each year they returned to mourn. The stream grew, and flowing over the uneven, rocky surface, made a mournful sound as though it had caught the lament of the Indian maidens. The tribes began to call it *Nehawka*, Weeping Water. When the French traders came they heard the lament of the stream and repeated the name, saying *l'eau qui pleure*.

Professor Dake's was not the only poem to be associated with a Nebraska river. If his epic narrative was Homeric, that of E. E. Blackman, Curator of the State Historical Society Museum (1902-1942), *Niobrara's Love Story: An Indian Romance of Pre-Historic Nebraska; of the Fabled Ancient Empire of Quivera*,<sup>16</sup> which he published in 1900, was in the pattern and verse form of Longfellow's *Hiawatha* of 1856. It tells the story of Keya Paha, the valiant youthful hunter, and Niobrara, daughter of King Tartarax, who named the Niobrara River in northwestern Nebraska after her. Like Dake's it is a creditable poem of an imitative type. I have not found that any legend of the Niobrara River arose from this narrative, perhaps because of the later date of its composition and because of the less haunting, though musical, character of the stream's name.

To return to the Weeping Water, Professor Lindberg's poem is in the manner neither of Homer's *Iliad* nor of Longfellow's Indian

<sup>15</sup> *Nebraska History*, XVII (1936), 80. Miss Williams was the winner of an essay contest offered by the Sons and Daughters of Nebraska. In the latest oral version of the legend I have found (1947), a tribe of Indians is massacred by white men rather than by another tribe.

<sup>16</sup> Printed at Roca, Nebraska, 1900.

poem but is an attractive lyrical lament. Here are the first and last stanzas:

Though all nature around us is smiling  
 There's a note of despair in the song.  
 Come tell me, no longer beguiling,  
 Come tell me the tale of thy wrong.  
 Then a murmur as soft as the breeze,  
 Yet weird as the sighing of waves—  
 "I'm grieving the death of my kinsmen,  
 I'm grieving the death of my braves." . . .

Now the sun in its glory is shining,  
 And the shadows of evening unfold.  
 No breezes the tree-tops are fretting,  
 And the cloudland is purple and gold;  
 Still the soul-rending wail of the mourner,  
 An echo from countless graves;  
 "Revenge me, revenge me, my kinsmen,  
 Revenge me, revenge me, my braves."

A third poem on the Weeping Water legend is a ballad in eleven rhymed quatrains composed according to his father, I. N. Hunter,<sup>17</sup> by Alfred Vernon Hunter, former Director of Public Relations at Nebraska Wesleyan University, who was born in Weeping Water. It is entitled "The Legend of Weeping Water," and runs in part:

Long before the white man wandered  
 To these rich Nebraska lands  
 Indians in their paint and feathers  
 Roamed in savage warlike bands. . . .

Then one day the war cry sounded  
 Over valley, hill and plain.  
 From the North came dusky warriors,  
 From that unknown vast domain. . . .

Awful was the scene that followed,  
 Yells and warwhoops echoed shrill,  
 But at last as night descended  
 Death had conquered; all was still.

Then the women in the wigwams  
 Hearing rumors of the fight,  
 Bearing flaming flickering torches  
 Soon were wandering in the night.

<sup>17</sup> "Recollections of Weeping Water" (in which the ballad is quoted in full), *Nebraska Pioneer Reminiscences* (Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1916), issued by the Nebraska Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Professor A. G. Kennedy of Stanford University, who was born and grew up in

There they found the loved ones lying,  
 Calm in everlasting sleep.  
 Little wonder that the women,  
 Broken-hearted, all, should weep.

Hours and hours they kept on weeping.  
 'Til their tears began to flow  
 In many trickling streamlets  
 To the valley down below.

These together joined their forces  
 To produce a larger stream  
 Which has ever since been flowing  
 As you see it in this scene.

Indians christened it Nehawka,  
 Crying water means the same.  
 In this way the legend tells us  
 Weeping Water got its name.

At this point, the oral prose version of an old settler may be reproduced. The late Thomas S. Allen, a brother-in-law of W. J. Bryan, gave the following account in a Nebraska newspaper:

When I was a boy we lived on the banks of the stream Weeping Water and we had for neighbors several families that had settled in and around the village of Weeping Water in 1856. I have heard from several of those persons, and particularly Willis J. Horton, now deceased, this legend.

In the early days there was a feud between the Pawnee and Sioux Indians. One day the Pawnee and their allies, the Otoes, arranged to go to battle against the Sioux. As the warriors came from their reservations and were on the march, in the darkness of an October night, the two tribes—Pawnee and Otoe—met and mistaking each other for the common enemy, the Sioux, the battle began. When day came all the warriors were killed and it was then discovered that the allies had by mistake fought each other unto death. The squaws were filled with grief when the news of the battle reached them, and their tears formed the source of a stream called by them and their descendants Minne-boo-hoo.

The legend is that Lincoln in 1849 on a trip to the West came to the east bank of the Missouri and looking across saw a beautiful stream flowing into the river from the west. He was told that Indians called it Minne-boo-hoo. He jocularly remarked that if Minnehaha is "Laughing Water," Minne-boo-hoo should be Weeping Water. From that day on the white settlers accepted Lincoln's translation and the historic stream is now the Weeping Water.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> *Continued:*

Weeping Water, says that he too wrote a poem on the Weeping Water legend which was read as part of the graduation program at Doane College, Nebraska in 1902. It was later printed in the *Weeping Water Republican* but he no longer has a copy of it. Professors Lindberg and Kennedy were friends in their graduate student days.

<sup>18</sup> *Lincoln State Journal*, June 6, 1925.

Another and more credible version of the Minneboohoo story—for the stream was called the Weeping Water long before Lincoln's day, as will be shown—is that told by Frederic William Taylor, a professor of horticulture at the University of Nebraska, 1891–1893. He said that in the days when the admission of Kansas and Nebraska to statehood was agitating the country, President Lincoln was looking at a map of Nebraska when his attention was arrested by the name Weeping Water. He commented that “If Minnehaha is Laughing Water, Weeping Water should be Minneboohoo.”

My brother, Roscoe Pound of Cambridge, Massachusetts, wrote of the Minne-boo-hoo story as follows:

General John M. Thayer, afterward Governor of the State, was Colonel of the First Nebraska, a Brigadier General in the Vicksburg campaign, and active in politics as well as in military affairs during the Civil War. During the War there was great political animosity between two wings of the Republican party in Missouri, Kansas and Nebraska. There was a radical group which favored extreme measures against slavery and extreme methods of dealing with those who were not active in support of the Government, and on the other hand, a moderate party seeking to preserve unity among those not actively opposing the Union. The President was very anxious not to be drawn into taking sides and to do nothing which would identify him with either faction. As I heard General Thayer tell the story a controversy arose about the postmastership at Weeping Water. Appointment of a postmaster from the radical faction would have committed the administration, as would also appointment of a person conspicuously identified with the moderate faction. A committee went to Washington to urge this upon the President and set forth their case at some length. The President then said in substance, “Do I understand that the place is called Weeping Water? Laughing water is Minnehaha, so I suppose weeping water would be Minne-boo-hoo.”

There seems to be general agreement that Lincoln is responsible for the Minne-boo-hoo saying. I should put General Thayer's version as the most likely and Professor Taylor's as next in probability. Tom Allen's version seems to me improbable.

I suppose there is nobody now living who had personal knowledge of the controversy about the postmastership. General Thayer was active in the politics of the day and could speak from first hand knowledge.

#### L'EAU QUI PLEURE IN NEBRASKA HISTORY AND CARTOGRAPHY

An investigation of the Indian lore preserved and available throws no light on any legend concerning the Nehawka or Weeping Water. The *Twenty-seventh Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology* of the Smithsonian Institution deals with the Om-

aha tribe.<sup>19</sup> It is an exhaustive work of about 700 pages and includes among other material the traditional songs of the Omaha. There is no reference in these or elsewhere in the volume to a massacre legend. A long list of streams known to the Omaha <sup>20</sup> is included, but among them the Nehawka or Weeping Water is not entered. Nor is anything to be found in what is available concerning the Pawnee, Otoe, and Sioux tribes. For the Pawnee especially a large body of traditions and legends has been recorded.<sup>21</sup> But, of course, this negative evidence is not to be taken as proving that such a legend did not exist.

In the records of French travelers and explorers, the name Weeping Water for the stream appears at an early date. Father Marquette discovered the Mississippi as early as 1673, and he reached the mouth of the Missouri. La Salle reached the Missouri in 1682. The French carried on fur trading with the Omaha tribe in the middle of the eighteenth century. M. de Remonville, writing of the Missouri in Paris in 1702,<sup>22</sup> mentions fourteen Indian nations then living on the banks of the Missouri. Beginning in 1700, after the founding of Biloxi on the Gulf of Mexico, French explorers and fur traders moved up the Mississippi from Louisiana. Further penetration of the area followed after the founding of New Orleans in 1717 and of St. Louis in 1765. The Otcos were in the region about 1717, and also the Pawnee, Panamaha (Omaha), and Comanche. The French were not supplanted by the English until the latter part of the eighteenth century. In the closing decades of the eighteenth century trappers were active on the lower reaches of the Missouri and its branches and had even ventured up the Platte.

The French explorers and traders seem to have given definite descriptive names to streams, islands, and other landmarks, to make them identifiable for those coming later. Thus the Niobrara, a fast flowing river, was *l'Eau qui court* or "running water," on the Perrin

<sup>19</sup> Alice C. Fletcher and Francis La Flesche (a member of the Omaha tribe), "The Omaha Tribe," *Twenty-seventh Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology . . . 1905-1906* (Washington, 1911), pp. 15 ff.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 89-94.

<sup>21</sup> George A. Dorsey, *Traditions of the Skidi Pawnee*, *Memoirs of the American Folk-Lore Society*, VIII (1904); also his *Pawnee Mythology I*, published by the Carnegie Institute of Washington 1906, and G. B. Grinnell, *Pawnee Hero Stories and Folk Tales* (New York, 1899).

<sup>22</sup> Pierre Margry, *Mémoires et documents*, VI (Paris, 1888) pp. 175-190.

du Lac Map of 1802.<sup>23</sup> This was the name for the river used by Father de Smet in the mid-nineteenth century: "My land journey commenced at Bellevue, nine miles beyond the Nebraska or Platte river, thence to the mouth of the Niobrara or *L'Eau-qui-court*, ten days' march." <sup>24</sup>

The same old map has *R. qui monte*, translated as "the river which paints" and named White Paint Creek on the map used by Lewis and Clark. It is now the Bazile, which flows into the Missouri in Knox County, Nebraska. *L'eau bleu* of these maps is Blue Water River, and there are names such as River Bois Blanc, White Wood, Cedar Island, Muddy Island, Long View. The Evans Map of 1755, that of Lewis and Clark, has River Qui Parle, "river which speaks," for the "Sheyenne." Obviously the Weeping Water, or river that weeps, was so designated by the French because it made a mournful sound flowing over its uneven rocky bed. Today it is much flooded with silt in the Nehawka region and the weeping sound which gave it its name is dulled or gone.

The Perrin Du Lac Map gives *L'eau qua pleure*, followed by the English translation "weeping water," as flowing into the Missouri. The same entry but with the correct French pronoun *qui* is made in the so-called Indian Office Map (1755), which under the name of Evans was transmitted by President Thomas Jefferson to Lewis and Clark.<sup>25</sup> Thus it, too, antedates the Lewis and Clark expedition and its written records.

As for travelers, no mention of the Weeping Water region appears in the *Journal* of Jean Baptiste Truteau (Trudeau) among the

<sup>23</sup> The so-called Perrin du Lac Map, *Carte du Missouri levée ou rectifiée dans toute son étendue*, was printed at Paris in 1802. The map is substantially the same as the Mackay Map. James Mackay went up the Missouri, representing the Missouri Fur Company, in the summer of 1795. He spent the winter in Nebraska, on the Elkhorn and Niobrara rivers. Perrin du Lac entered Mackay's discoveries on the map published in connection with his book of travels, *Voyage dans les deux Louisianes, et chez les nations sauvages du Missouri, . . . 1801, 1802 et 1803* (Paris, 1805). The Perrin du Lac Map is reprinted in the *South Dakota Historical Collections*, VII, and also in the *Missouri Historical Society Collections*, IV (1912).

<sup>24</sup> In letters written concerning the expeditions to the Sioux, *Life, Letters and Travels of Father Pierre-Jean De Smet*, edited by Hiram Martin Chittenden and Alfred Talbot Richardson (New York, 1905), II, 618.

<sup>25</sup> See Raphael V. Hamilton, "Early Maps of the Missouri Valley," *American Historical Review*, XXXIX (July, 1934), 629-662; and Annie Heloise Abel, "A New Lewis and Clark Map," *Geographical Review*, I (May, 1916). Also *Report of the American Historical Association*, 1908, pp. 188-189.

Arikara Indians in 1795,<sup>26</sup> nor in the works of Washington Irving, George Catlin,<sup>27</sup> and others. There is unmistakable reference, however, in the journals (1804–1806) of Lewis and Clark, who kept a detailed log of each day.

July 20, Friday, 1804

a cool morning passed a large willow Island (I) on the S.S. and the mouth of a Creek about 25 yds wide on the L.S. called by the french *L'Eue qui pleure*, or the Water which cry's (weeping water), this Creek falls into the river above a Clift of brown Clay opposit the Willow Island . . .

From this evening's encampment a man may walk to the Pani [Pawnee] Village on the S bank of the Platte River in two days and to the Ottean in one day.<sup>28</sup>

Patrick Gass of the same expedition has a similar entry in his journal:

Friday July 20, 1804 we embarked early; passed high yellow banks on the south D Side and a creek called the Water-which-cries, or the Weeping Stream, opposite a willow island, and encamped on a prairie on the south side.<sup>29</sup>

Opinion on the authenticity of the legend of Weeping Water has tended, in the main, toward disbelief in its existence before Dake's poem. A. E. Sheldon, Secretary of the State Historical Society and historian of Nebraska, thought it "certainly as much a work of the imagination as Virgil's story of the founding of Troy."<sup>30</sup> E. E. Blackman, who talked with Isaac Pollard, a pioneer who settled on the banks of the stream in 1856, not far from the present town of Nehawka, says that Pollard decided that the legend originated with Dake. Blackman adds, "I have given the legends of Nebraska considerable study for the past twenty-five years and have never found evidence that this legend originated from any other source."<sup>31</sup> Pollard did find, however, unmistakable evidence of Indian activities in his vicinity. J. Sterling Morton reported in a Nebraska newspaper the discovery of extensive flint mines on Pollard's farm in 1901 and 1902.<sup>32</sup> The stratum containing the flint is about

<sup>26</sup> *Missouri Historical Society Publications*, IV.

<sup>27</sup> George Catlin, *North American Indians* (New York, 1841).

<sup>28</sup> Edited by Reuben Gold Thwaite (1904) I, 85.

<sup>29</sup> *Journal of the Voyages and Travels of a Corps of Discovery under the Command of Captain Lewis and Captain Clark . . .* (Philadelphia, 1911), I, xxxiv, ff.; originally published in 1807.

<sup>30</sup> *Plattsmouth Journal*, May 25, 1936.

<sup>31</sup> *Nebraska History*, VI (1923), 45.

<sup>32</sup> *The Conservative*, July 11, 1901. E. E. Blackman reported on them in 1902



halfway up the small bluffs which border the stream. Tunnelings were found by Pollard and a committee of archaeologists in a limestone-bordered ravine, also burial mounds on the hillside and ruins of lodges near the quarries. Evidence of Indian life along the Weeping Water is unmistakable.

These discoveries led many, such as Dr. L. R. Kunkel of Weeping Water, to believe that the legend might really antedate Professor Dake. Kunkel, in a newspaper article, writes of the relics of ancient life found along the creek and repeats the legend that

. . . two tribes fought long years ago until all the warriors had been killed. The women made pilgrimages to this valley and wept, mourning the passage of their dead warriors until their tears made the creek known today as the Weeping Water. For years the story was thought to have been a myth, but as archaeologists study the country and dig into the many graves and house sites in this vicinity, the thought presents itself that perhaps this story might be true.<sup>33</sup>

It was Isaac Pollard who named the town of Nehawka. More is known now of Nebraska Indian languages than in his day, and present knowledge disposes finally of the story that the stream was named by Indians from a massacre along its banks. For her *Nebraska Place-Names*, Lilian Fitzpatrick was supplied with information concerning Indian names by Dr. M. R. Gilmore, a student of Nebraska Indian languages. Her entry for Nehawka reads:

This town received its name in a peculiar way. When the government granted a post office to the farmers along the north branch of the Weeping Water creek, Isaac Pollard, one of the settlers, stopped at the post office department at Washington, during a trip to the east, to select a name for the new office. He wanted to use the Indian name for "Weeping Water," but the only one he could find was too hard to pronounce. Finally he came across the word "Nehawka" which meant something else, but which he thought sounded well, and so this name was agreed upon. Nehawka is a white man's approximation to the Omaha and Otoe Indian name of the creek, Nigah'e, which does not mean "weeping water" but means the sound of water as it runs over low falls, that is, "rustling water."<sup>34</sup>

and 1903. See also his "Nehawka Mines and Loup Valley Indian Remains." *Nebraska State Historical Society Reports*, X, *Nebraska History*, 1924.

<sup>33</sup> *Lincoln Journal and Star*, October 13, 1935.

<sup>34</sup> *Nebraska Place-Names*, University of Nebraska Studies in Language, Literature, and Criticism, No. 6 (1925), pp. 32-33. Dr. Gilmore is a Nebraskan now associated with the Museum of Anthropology of the University of Michigan. In his "Some Indian Place-Names" in *Publications of the Nebraska State Historical Society*, XIX, 130-139, Dr. Gilmore gives many examples of Indian names that have been mistranslated.

In the entry for the town of Weeping Water Miss Fitzpatrick says:

The Omaha and Otoe Indian name of the creek is Nigah<sup>o</sup>e, from *ni*, water, and *gah<sup>o</sup>e*, the rustling and swishing sound of water running over low falls, or "rustling water." The *h<sup>o</sup>* is an *h* with a guttural sound. The name was confused by white men with Nih<sup>o</sup>age which means "weeping water" from *ni*, water, and *h<sup>o</sup>age*, weeping. The legend of "weeping water" is a white man's tradition or invention to account for the word "weeping water," a mistranslation as stated above.

The Indians could hardly have had a legend that the stream had its origin in tears: their associations with its name were not associations of lamentation.

What do we really know, in the twentieth century, of the Weeping Water legend, told in poetic form in the nineteenth? For one thing, it is clear that the name of the stream is old. It is also clear that it was given by French explorers and traders, not by Indians. Students of Nebraska Indian languages testify that to the Indians it was not the mournful stream but the rustling stream. *Nehawka* does not mean weeping water but is a white man's approximation of an Indian name of different meaning. There is a long stretch of time from the end of the eighteenth century, before which the Weeping Water already had its name, to the middle of the nineteenth, when Professor Dake wrote of it.

The Midwest plains afforded the choicest of hunting grounds for Indian tribes. The first to have entered are said to have been the Pawnee. They came earlier than the Sioux, by perhaps a century. During the hundred years that followed the entry of the Sioux, the Pawnee and allied tribes of eastern Nebraska, the Omaha, Otoe, and Ponca, warred with the Sioux. Enough massacres, recorded and unrecorded, occurred on the plains to have started legends independent of the stream called the Weeping Water by white men.

I am inclined to believe that there was a tradition of an Indian massacre before Dake wrote his preface. Why should he have stated that his Nebraska narrative was founded on a legend if it was not? The incident in his second poem "The Raw Hide," was not of his own creation. Blackman made no claim that his poem of the Niobrara had a legendary basis. Whether the massacre legend, if there was one before Dake, was of Indian origin, the legacy of some actual massacre later associated with the stream by Indians

or by whites, or instead was evolved by whites from the mournful name of the Weeping Water, it is impossible now to determine. But it has seemed to me of interest to trace, so far as I could, a tale appearing in historic times and now unmistakably traditional.

*1947*

## NEBRASKA CAVE LORE<sup>1</sup>

### I

Superstitions, legends and fairy stories have always clustered about caves. Yet there seems to have been less special collection of such lore than of other phases of folklore. In the mass of studies turned out, on innumerable topics in so many fields, collectanea of cave lore have played a minor role. There appears to be less of it than that of seas, streams, fountains and woods. It belongs, in any case, to local rather than to general lore and it has its own special interest and deserves its own recording. Nearly every striking or picturesque cave develops its individual story or stories, and its discoverer too deserves chronicling when he can be determined. There are holes all over the earth, caverns of various shapes, large and small, some amazingly beautiful, others drab and dull. In general legend, these have been inhabited by all sorts of strange creatures, giants, ogres, monsters; in German story typically by dwarfs. Polyphemus, the one-eyed giant being from whom Ulysses saved himself, lived in a cave near Mount Aetna. There is a cave in which winds are restrained in the first book of Virgil's *Aeneid*. In *Beowulf* Grendel's mother has a subterranean dwelling and the dragon guarding the hidden treasure issued from a cave. Hartley

<sup>1</sup> Read in part before the Western Folklore Conference at the University of Denver, July 15, 1948.

Alexander records a Haitian legend telling of the origin of man in a cave<sup>2</sup> and another telling that the sun and moon were born in caves. Water too issued from caves. Coleridge's Alph, the sacred river, "ran Through caverns measureless to man Down to a sunless sea." In the American West, giants and ogres and dwarfs are replaced by Indians, train robbers, and horse-thieves in need of hideouts, and by men concealing or looking for buried treasure. In older days, no doubt, legends would have arisen concerning the government gold underground in Kentucky. They may, indeed, yet appear if they have not done so already.

Caves are not often associated with Nebraska, a region of prairie and hill and rather sparse woodland. Its caves are not numerous nor are they famous. Yet for just these reasons it may well have initial treatment in an article that is not of geological or mineralogical or archaeological stimulus, or merely an uninquiring popular presentation of legends and factual narrations, but is devoted to the folklore of caves of a single state.

Nebraska has no large caves that are nationally known and sought out, and hence sometimes commercially profitable. There are no Mammoth Caves such as Kentucky's with its 150 miles so far explored, no Cave of the Winds such as that at Manitou, Colorado, or that at Hot Springs, South Dakota, where a strong current blows in and out alternately. It has no ice caves such as exist in Montana and Colorado; no amazing Carlsbad Caverns such as Arizona's, of which nearly 40 miles have now been explored. It has no caverns such as those of the Yellowstone region or the Black Hills or the Ozarks. Nor are any of similar well-deserved celebrity likely to be discovered here in the future. Nebraska's caves do not abound in crystals, stalactites, stalagmites and fossils and they have no glamorous reds, yellows, purples and pastel shades, to excite the wonder of visitors. Two (those at Nebraska City and Lincoln) are electrically lighted in a minor way, but no elevators are needed nor guides for visitors. Yet search reveals more interesting caves in Nebraska than might be expected and more lore concerning them. Surely such lore deserves chronicling before historic fact has been utterly lost and before dates and personages become yet more confused and tall tales taller.

<sup>2</sup> Hartley Burr Alexander, *Latin American Mythology*. The Mythology of All Races Series, XI (Boston, 1920), 28.

Following is a survey of the Nebraska caves with which I am yet acquainted, those that are best known. Some are the work of natural forces in the past and some have been excavated or tampered with by man.

## II. THREE EASTERN NEBRASKA CAVES

### *Pahuk Cave*

In a discussion of Nebraska caves, leading place should go, it seems to me, to Pahuk (Pahook, Pah-huk, Pawhuk, Pohuk) Cave on the Platte River near Fremont, known in the past among the inhabitants of the region as Elephant Cave. It has loomed large in Pawnee Indian lore. Unusual mystery and legend have gathered about it, though all that remains of it now is a gash in a clay bank at the side of a road along the Platte. The road was opened up or at least widened in recent times. It runs between Fremont in Dodge County and Cedar Bluffs in Saunders County. The gash is easily seen from the road but is pretty much dirt filled. Even for one on hands and knees progress is blocked. Few persons in Fremont remember much about Pahuk Bluff or the cave below it. Possibly the slit in the bank reveals the original entrance; just as possibly it does not. According to Dr. Gilbert C. Lueninghoener, geologist at Midland College, Fremont, the cave was one big chamber only. Externally the opening in the bank and the near-by bluff, which is 60 feet high above the Platte, seem uninteresting; but in the light of their role in Indian days they are not. In 1927 no little effort was made before the Chamber of Commerce of Saunders County to have Pahuk Bluff marked as an historic spot. Among those urging this were Dr. A. E. Sheldon, Secretary of the Nebraska State Historical Society, and Captain Luther H. North, pioneer scout and frontiersman of Columbus.

The central seats of the Pawnee Indians when the white man first came to Nebraska were along the Platte and Loup Rivers. There was an Indian village on the summit of Pahuk Bluff. General John M. Thayer, later Governor of Nebraska (1887 through 1890), held council with the Pawnee there in 1854. When the Indians were moved elsewhere, their village was burned, perhaps by them, perhaps by others. Pahuk Bluff was selected as the site of "Neapolis," the projected capital of Nebraska, by an act of the Territorial Legislature of 1858, an act later declared void. The

Pawnee tribe was that most advanced in culture of the Indian tribes in Nebraska. Their legends have been gathered by several scholars, notably George A. Dorsey.<sup>3</sup> Some of the Pawnee tales, too, are remembered by Mari Sandoz from her talks with an old Pawnee: Pahuk, it seems well established, was the sacred or holy place of the Pawnee. It was to them, said A. E. Sheldon in an address,<sup>4</sup> what Mecca was to the Mohammedans and Mount Sinai to the Christians. The site of Pahuk has been definitely fixed as the bluff across the Platte from Fremont. It may be seen clearly from the roadway of the Union Pacific or from the bridge of the Northwestern Railway crossing the Platte. The bluff rises abruptly on the south bank of the river a short distance east of the bridge. The ethnologist, M. R. Gilmore, then Curator of the Nebraska State Historical Society Museum, later Curator of Ethnology, Museum of Anthropology of the University of Michigan, went there in August, 1914, with Chief White Eagle of the Skidi Tribe of Pawnee, who pointed out the place to him.<sup>5</sup> Others made the same identification.

In the Pawnee religion, only less powerful than their main deity Tirawa and the gods of the heavens were those of the earth. These were ruled over by lodges of Nahurak or Animals, of which *loci* there were about five. Here the animals gathered together in council to promote or to harm the fortunes of human beings. The animals had many powers, such as that of changing men to animals or birds or the converse. Under their tutelage the favored persons were enabled to fly like eagles, swim like turtles, live like the coyote, and perform sleight of hand. In these lodges of the Pawnee the young aspirants for the supernatural powers of the medicine men were guided and there were taught by leaders or errand men or messengers who served as liaison beings between the gods and men. Supreme among the Pawnee lodges was Pahuk. In its under-

<sup>3</sup> George A. Dorsey, *Pawnee Mythology*, Vol. 1 (Carnegie Institute, Washington, 1906) and his *Traditions of the Skidi Pawnee*, *Memoirs of the American Folklore Society*, VIII, 1904.

<sup>4</sup> Letter, A. E. Sheldon to the Board of Commissioners of Saunders County at Wahoo, Nebraska, June 17, 1927. See also his address "The Pawnee Nation and the Battle of Battle Creek" given at a meeting of the Chamber of Commerce, Battle Creek, Nebraska, November 16, 1939. Typed MSS., Nebraska State Historical Society.

<sup>5</sup> Gilmore gives the site at "1/2 of n. e. of sec 22 and west 1/2 of n. w. 1/4 sec 23, twmp 17 north range east." See M. R. Gilmore, "The Legend of Pahuk." Typed MS., Nebraska State Historical Society.

ground chamber were learned from the wild animals and birds their mysteries and magical powers and the virtues of different roots and herbs. The aspirants thus favored took back to their people the wisdom and the healing gifts they learned there. An illustrative sentence showing the high status of Pahuk is the following, from a story told by Beaver Kitkehahki, who inherited it from his father, who was keeper of the Beaver medicine, the origin of which the story explains:

They [the medicine men, the animals] sent the Magpie to all the lodges and went to Pahuk last, for there was the lodge that was really the head of all the other lodges.<sup>6</sup>

The name Pahuk, according to Dr. Gilmore, literally means headland or promontory but sometimes the Pawnee spoke of it as Nahura Waruksti, Sacred Ground or Wonderful Ground, because of the mystery and awe with which the place was invested in their minds. The statement has been made that Pahuk was to the Pawnee the center of the universe and the place of the origin of man. Mari Sandoz is one of those recalling this from a Pawnee source.

A recurrent legend concerning Pahuk was summarized by Dr. Gilmore who says of it, "From White Eagle I obtained the narrative which I here set forth in as good a rendering as possible in English of his version of the myth." The translation was made, at the time of establishing the site of Pahuk, by a young Pawnee named Charles Knifechief. He adds, "There are other versions extant as told by other narrators but differing in no essentials." Dr. Gilmore's summary runs as follows:

A young son is killed by his father and his body thrown into the Platte. He is finally restored to life by the decision of the animals. Each animal taught his particular remedy and all the songs pertaining to the ritual of healing. He returned to his people, having been told to use these remedies given him by the great powers of Heaven.

The corresponding Pawnee tales told by Dorsey are all very long and detailed.<sup>7</sup> At this point a letter from Captain Luther North may be cited:

<sup>6</sup>From "The Medicine Child and the Beaver," Tale 77 in Dorsey's *Pawnee Mythology*, pp. 241-54. Other references to Pahuk may be found in Tales 78, 85, 86, 89. See also in *Traditions of the Skidi Pawnee*, Tale 59, "Scabby Bull and the Wonderful Medicine Man," p. 231.

<sup>7</sup>Dorsey, *Pawnee Mythology* I, section III, "The Origin of Medicine Ceremonies of Power."



The Hill, Pahuk Bluff, which he [A. E. Sheldon] recommends marking as a historic site is according to a legend of the Pawnee the home of Nah-hoo-nack and the ghost animals. Their home is deep down in the hill and the entrance is from below the water of the river. There is a long tunnel to go through before you come to the opening of the house and at the door as Guards are a huge rattlesnake and a gigantic grizzly bear. Any one entering must pass between them and if they show the least sign of fear they would never be heard from again.

I know a very good story of a young Pawnee who was supposed to have been in this house.\*

Captain North added that the story was too long for him to try to tell it in his letter. It seems probable that it was a variant of that known to Dr. Gilmore and those recorded by Dr. Dorsey.

In June, 1948, Althea Marr Witte of Fremont gave me this information as told to her by Dr. G. C. Lueninghoener of Midland College:

The cave, which is nothing but a small slit now, was of clay and had only one large chamber. The only legend I know is of Chief Pohuk. The story goes that the parents of their baby who later was Chief Pohuk threw him into the Platte river and abandoned him because he was such a small, weak and sickly baby. The animals such as the beavers, woodchucks, squirrels and turtles rescued him and cared for him. They nursed him to health, brought him food, and taught him many things. Because he was so close to nature he grew to be very wise and strong and in time became one of the greatest chiefs of the Pawnee tribe.

The latest tale I have heard concerning Pahuk cave was from a woman living in a shack on the low ground between the bluff and the river. She said she had heard that two boys "had been caught in it and as a result it was dynamited." She said she did not know whether this was true, being herself relatively a newcomer, and so far no one has verified her story to me.

### *Lincoln Cave*

The conspicuous sign on the high ground that is the site of the Lincoln cave reads on one side "Notorious Old Cave" and on the other "Robbers' Cave." The cave is described as follows in the entry concerning Lincoln in the Federal Writer's Project *Guide to Nebraska*:

The Cave, 11th and High Streets . . . is a series of caverns and winding passages in an outcrop of Dakota sandstone. The walls scratched with names,

\* Preserved in the Library of the State Historical Society, Lincoln.

initials and dates, are streaked in ocherous yellow and hematite reds and browns.

In Pawnee legend it was in the "Nahurac" spirits' cave that medicine men held mystic sacred rites, and neophytes were proven and initiated. A snow-bound wagon train used its protection; and after the Indian scare of 1862, settlers lived in it all winter. In 1863, when a stone quarry was started by three men who had acquired the title to the land from the Government, the removal of the cap rock destroyed the original entrance to the cave. In 1906 when the caverns were being cleared of debris so as to be used as a mushroom garden, stories of hidden treasure brought so many visitors to the place that plans were changed and the cave was kept open for sightseers and picnics.\*

This information in the *Guide* probably derives mainly from the present owners of the place who came to Lincoln in the 1880's.

The Lincoln cave had no doubt the usual origin of caves, through the action of water on sandstone or limestone. I have found no references to it in Pawnee lore, as I did for Pahuk. There were Indians of the Pawnee, Otoe, and Omaha tribes about in Lancaster County in early days; but I know of no traces of an Indian village or burial mounds in the vicinity. It is quite possible, for that matter, that the starting of a little quarrying (little is all there could have been) on the site opened up the cave for discovery. Nor can I find sources for the story of the snowbound wagon train nor for the story that settlers lived in it all the winter of 1862 during an Indian scare. There were mild Indian scares from time to time in Lancaster county in the late '50's and early '60's, but none of special interest in 1862 or in other of these years unless 1864. The cave had but one chamber then and that none too large. It would have been a dusty, unpleasant and, indeed, dangerous place, not easy to enter and quite dark. Removal nearer other settlers and nearer water would have been wiser.

My father came to Lincoln in 1867 and my mother in 1869. They knew the region well and its history; yet they were silent as to Indian knowledge of or use of the cave and as to the refuge of settlers there, so close to their own day. The cave had little celebrity until after 1906. The stories about it as a hideout of robbers and horse-thieves in the '70's and '80's, mentioned in the *Federal Guide to the City of Lincoln* (1937) always amused my mother. She said it was used as a beer cellar by a near-by brewery of her time. Among

\* Federal Writers Project, *Nebraska: A Guide to the Cornhusker State* (New York, 1939), p. 197.

others, Pearl J. Cosgrave, daughter of Judge P. J. Cosgrave, testifies that her mother too was amused by the stories of robbers and horse-thieves associated with the cave. The *Federal Guide to Nebraska* says nothing of the use of the cave for storage by brewers; but that it was so used is stated by the present owner and is entered in the *Lincoln Guide*. This seems well established. In 1869 two brewers bought the site and hired a laborer to enlarge the cave for the purpose of storing beer and malt underground in old-world fashion. A laborer is said to have spent three years off and on digging the chambers and passages out of sandstone with pick and shovel and wheelbarrow. The caverns are fairly large now. Some of the enlarging was done after 1906 when debris was cleared out and the place made accessible as a picnic grounds. In 1873 the brewers became bankrupt in the financial collapse and the cave was given up.

As for the robbers and horse-thieves said to have occupied the cave in the late '70's and the '80's, their presence there is very doubtful; their origin probably commercial. Members of the Pound family were all on hand then and never heard of them. Horses could not well be concealed in or outside the cave. So near the thriving Lincoln of those days, with its growing university, the presence of horse-thieves and robbers and their use of the brewers' old storage cave would have been known. Trouble would have arisen concerning them. My father was a judge and, of all persons, would have been likely to hear of their operations. Dwellers in a house on the site or near it were known to us, and never reported robbers in the neighborhood.

In summary, Indian knowledge of it and utilization of it for certain rites is possible but improbable. It has never been identified as one of the five *loci* recognized as sacred by the Pawnee. These five are known and are in places of another type. The stories of hidden treasure there have never been accepted as having a basis in fact. Belief in the use of the cave as a dwelling place for safety in winter by pioneer settlers, or use of it as a hideout of Jesse James (he has been assigned several such hideouts in Nebraska), and a later tale stating that a portion of Coxey's Army found lodging there in the winter of '93-'94 (mentioned in the *Lincoln Guide*), all these belong no doubt to folklore. Members of Coxey's Army crossed Nebraska in 1894, but there is no record of the stay of a group in Lincoln; and if there was, the cave would have been a hopelessly cramped and un-

pleasant lodging. The present owner who "arrived in the '80's" said nothing of it when I heard him recount the history of the cave. Possibly one or two of the Coxey itinerants were about the place but the "Army" did not lodge there. The utilization and enlargement of the cave by brewers is the only story connected with it that can be established.

At its lowest point the cave is said to go to a depth of about 82 feet from the top of the bit of high ground that is its location. It may cover in all its passages and chambers perhaps 700 feet, said the owner. It is worth visiting as it winds through sandstone walls into its present five chambers. High school picnics, college initiations and various other events have been held in it. It is lighted here and there by mild electric bulbs, and its depth and irregularity make it a weird though dusky and dusty setting for those wishing something of the sort. That legends of various types should have arisen about it seems inevitable and, to me, not regrettable.

### *John Brown's Cabin and Cave*

The most publicized of Nebraska's caves is the so-called John Brown's Cave, or Cabin and Cave, at Nebraska City. It is over a mile from the Missouri River at the right of State Highway 2 leading to the city and the river. Nebraska City was incorporated December 20, 1857; it was on the edge of free territory and in steamboat days was the busiest and most important city in the area. The river was crossed at Brownville and at Nebraska City, usually the latter. Nebraska City served as a second stop after Nemaha City on the underground railway when fugitive slaves were brought from Missouri through Kansas to be ferried over or carried over the ice from Nebraska to Iowa. From about 1854 to 1861 or a little later it was an important station in the successive hiding places in which the freed slaves and their convoys might rest in comparative safety. There are supposed to have been several of these hiding places in Nebraska City, a barn, for example, and a cave in a pasture, these perhaps changed from time to time for safety.

However dubious may be Brown's connection with the John Brown Cabin and however few or numerous the slaves he brought there, it is beyond question that he was in Nebraska City many times, passing through it on his journeys from the east by way of

Chicago to Kansas and return. An interesting paragraph from the *Nebraska City News* of February 12, 1859, tells of what proved to be Brown's last appearance in Nebraska City. More will be said of this, a unique expedition in his midwestern years, later:

John Brown, Captain John Brown, of Osawatomie . . . passed through this city late last Friday evening at the head of a herd of stolen niggers taken from Southern Missouri, accompanied with a gang of horsethieves of the most desperate character. They had a large number of stolen horses in their possession—two of which were taken and are now held by the deputy sheriff of this County.

There is an appropriateness and fitness in nigger stealing being associated with horsethieves that the rankest black republican cannot fail to appreciate.

The so-called Brown cabin is now a small museum free to the public. It is advertised as the "oldest wooden structure now in Nebraska." It is of brown cottonwood logs and according to its historian and late owner, Edward D. Bartling,<sup>10</sup> it was built by Allen B. Mayhew, its first occupant, in 1851. When the state highway was put through in recent times, the cabin was moved about 25 feet to the north, was placed on a foundation of natural limestone and was somewhat changed or restored by Bartling in minor ways. An earthen cave for storage was excavated near it, as is sometimes the practice nowadays, though refrigeration has done much to end such caves. Bartling says that when the house was moved it was placed over the original cave site. The "cave" is now much like a 10 x 12 cellar to the cabin. The entrance (or perhaps it was the outlet), now just outside to the east, was originally, it is stated, in a ravine about 75 feet west of the cabin and hidden in the underbrush; traces of it are supposedly still to be seen there. Accounts vary. Those knowing the early days have affirmed that there was originally no connection between the cabin and the cave;<sup>11</sup> others state that the cave was a tunnel running directly under the Mayhew home and entered by a trap door in the cabin;<sup>12</sup> others that a cistern was enlarged to form the cave.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Edward D. Bartling, *John Henry Kagi and the Old Log Cabin Home* (Published by author, Nebraska City, 1938, 1940, 1943.)

<sup>11</sup> N. C. Abbott, *Omaha World-Herald*, October 27, 1929.

<sup>12</sup> *Nebraska City News*, November 14, 1874.

<sup>13</sup> Wayne Overturf, "John Brown's Cabin at Nebraska City," *Nebraska History Magazine*, XXI, (April-June, 1940), 93-97 "After the battle of Osawatomie the cistern at the Mayhew cabin was converted into a cave." See also a letter from Eugenia Rowan (aged 80) in 1938, mentioned by Bartling, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

Since the cabin was moved in recent times and is said to be now over the original cave site, it could not have been over it originally. The cistern testimony is probably erroneous too.

Brown's best biographer, Oswald Garrison Villard, stated the following concerning the last appearance of Brown in Nebraska City, that told in the newspaper item of 1859 quoted above. The last lines deserve special attention.

On the 19th of December, 1858, began one of the most picturesque incidents in John Brown's life . . . his incursion into Missouri and his liberation of slaves by force of arms. While as already recorded Brown had taken two slaves out of Kansas to freedom before this wholesale liberation and was throughout his life an ever-ready agent of the Underground Railroad, he was at no time especially interested in this piecemeal method of weakening slavery. It was to his mind wasting time, when a bold attack might liberate five hundred or a thousand slaves.<sup>14</sup>

Whether or not Brown had previously taken more than two or three slaves out of Kansas to freedom,<sup>15</sup> his arrival with the group of Missouri slaves chronicled in the Nebraska City newspaper of February 12, 1859, was his only expedition of the kind. The operations of the Underground may have been pretty steady before, during, and after his coming to Kansas; but Brown himself devoted his activities to other matters than "piecemeal" rescues. After reaching Canada with his group of freed slaves in 1859 he planned the Harper's Ferry debacle in which his leading men were killed and he himself was captured and, on December 2 of that year, was hanged.

Villard's biography supplies a chronology of Brown's movements from his departure for Kansas till his death.<sup>16</sup> It is important to note from it his visits to Nebraska City, when they occurred, and who was with him. He first arrived in Kansas October 7, 1855. The probable date of his leaving Topcka for Nebraska is July 23, 1856. He reached Nebraska City soon thereafter. Those in his party are enumerated by Villard.<sup>17</sup> No fugitive slaves were with him on this trip. He arrived at Topeka on his return journey, August 10. On October 8 after the battle of Osawatimie, he narrowly escaped

<sup>14</sup> Oswald Garrison Villard, *John Brown: A Biography Fifty Years After* (Boston, 1910), p. 367.

<sup>15</sup> Villard notes that Brown's son, John Brown, Jr., freed two slaves in 1856, but they were returned to their masters. *Ibid.*, pp. 150-151.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 672.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 222.

capture by Lieutenant Cooke near Nebraska City and went on to Tabor and Chicago. This time a fugitive slave was along. A. B. Keim places this liberation in 1855,<sup>18</sup> but Brown did not leave Kansas for Nebraska in that year. Brown's son, Jason, gave the following account:

We crossed the river at Topeka. We had a one-mule team and a one-horse covered wagon. The mule team was full of arms and ammunition that father was taking out to Tabor . . . In the covered one-horse team was a fugitive slave covered with hay, father lying sick, Owen, John and I. Owen, John and I walked all we could to save the horse . . . We finally got both wagons together at the ferry at Nebraska City and camped: Next morning we crossed the river by rope ferry, into the southeast corner of Iowa. When we landed we let the contraband out of the hay, fixed him up as best we could, and traveled on to Tabor. There Owen stopped and the Negro there found work.<sup>19</sup>

Note the word *camped* in Jason Brown's account of their stay at Nebraska City. Brown started back to Tabor about October 27, 1856, but did not return to Nebraska and Kansas. Instead he went again to Chicago and on east. In the fall of 1857 he again reached Nebraska and proceeded to Topeka where he stayed a few days, then started back to Nebraska City on November 17. Again there were no fugitive slaves in the party.<sup>20</sup> He arrived at Tabor about November 22 and journeyed east again. During his brief stay in Tabor Brown offered to take his men, go to Nebraska City and rescue from jail a slave who had run away and had lost his arm when captured, if the Tabor people would pay his actual expenses. He promised to put the slave in their hands, but they were afraid of the consequences and did not give him the means.<sup>21</sup> Brown left Boston on the last of his journeys to Kansas on June 3, 1859, and was in Lawrence on June 26. On December 20, 1858, came his raid into Missouri described by Villard. He entered Nebraska February, 1859 (this was his last day in Kansas), crossed the Missouri River at Nebraska City, reached Tabor with his slaves on February 4, and on March 12 saw them ferried over to Windsor, Canada.

Of much interest and special pertinence is a letter from Belpre, Kansas by E. F. Mayhew, son of Allen B. Mayhew who built the

<sup>18</sup> A. B. Keim, "John Brown in Richardson County," *Transactions and Reports of the Nebraska State Historical Society*, II, 109-13. Keim tells of Brown's headquarters in Falls City but says nothing of the Nebraska City cave in Otoe County.

<sup>19</sup> Villard, *op. cit.*, p. 262.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 308.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 311.

cabin. It was written in 1925 in response to an inquiry from N. C. Abbott of Nebraska City.

The cave you speak of on my father's farm was dug in the fall of 1856 and used for storing potatoes. It was later enlarged to three rooms and used for storing wine only one season. . . . There was never a Negro in it while my father owned it that we know of. However, there was a Negro woman at our house one night on her way north. She and the ones instrumental in bringing her there had been directed by John Kagy. At another time Kagy brought 14 Negroes there for breakfast one morning. It was at this time that the officers and some men from Missouri came to the house after him. Although my father told them he was upstairs they were afraid to go after him, knowing he was armed. . . . My father told them not to bring any more Negroes there, as it was only making trouble. . . . I lived in the log house from the time I was about 6 until I was about 12 years old. We moved into another about 1860.<sup>22</sup>

This testimony accounts for the cabin and the cave till 1860 or perhaps 1859 or possibly, if Mayhew's date is *very* vaguely given, till 1857. The Mayhew son should know whereof he writes. Any of the three Pound children, brought up like the Mayhews, in or near a small prairie town, would have explored a cave so close to their home and would have known of the goings on there, whether in the daytime or night, this when they were between the ages of six and twelve.

If Allen B. Mayhew helped by his father-in-law Abraham Kagy, dug the cave and the Mayhews lived in the cabin from 1851 till 1860 or thereabouts, it would seem that if the cave was ever a hiding place for freed slaves it must have been after John Brown's death. The Kagys were strong abolitionists. John Henry Kagi (he preferred to respell the name in the Swiss way), brother of Mayhew's wife, was an exceptionally able young man. At one time he was the Kansas correspondent for the New York *Herald Tribune*, and he was one of John Brown's chief advisers and assistants. He surely visited his sister at the cabin more than the one time when he brought the slaves to be fed and was asked not to do so again. Kagi was killed, however, at Harper's Ferry at the age of twenty-four. This link between the cabin and freed slaves did not exist after 1859. John Brown may have been with Kagi several times; but the cabin was never his headquarters and it is not probable that he ever led slaves there, in view of the younger Mayhew's statement and of Villard's records of Brown's movements.

<sup>22</sup> Omaha *World-Herald*, October 22, 1927.



There was, then, a cave near the log cabin in the years between the Osawatomie event in the spring of 1856 and Brown's last visit to Nebraska in February, 1859, the year of his Harper's Ferry disaster. That he was ever in the cabin more than casually, if that, or that Negroes were hidden in the cave in his lifetime has not been established.

A puzzling testimony at variance with that of E. F. Mayhew is that of John H. Blue, editor of a Nebraska City newspaper, the *Chronicle*. Blue wrote on October 27, 1874, that is, fifteen years after Brown's death:

The Nebraska City cave was dug after the battle of Osawatomie, in which John Brown lost a son, and he reverted to more secretive methods of removing slaves from the south. Bands of renegades were organized at strategic points and friends of Brown in Nebraska City organized a "Vegetarian Society" under which guise they drew in the more fanatical abolitionists. The Vegetarian Society members lived up to the name of their organization, so to speak, by declaring that the cave was dug in which to store fruits and vegetables for winter use. The cave, however, never harbored food until long after the Civil War and people other than the slave runners moved on the land.

This seems inaccurate since the cave was dug in Allen Mayhew's day and, if the Vegetarian Society used it, it must have been after the Mayhews had moved and after Brown's death in 1859. Doubtless, however, the Underground was still operating after Brown and J. H. Kagi died.

Mrs. Lena Linhoff who lived in the cabin in 1886 said that on the door casing in the basement leading to the cave were written not fewer than fifteen names of Negroes. This is hardly of help in determining whether, if ever, Negroes were in the cave while John Brown was alive. And one wonders how she determined certainly, so many years after the Civil War, that the names were those of Negroes.<sup>23</sup>

Finally, here is contemporary lore of the cave as familiar to Robert Brust, a student from Nebraska City attending the University of Nebraska in 1948:

Perhaps the most interesting legend centers around an old log cabin which is built over an underground tunnel. The cabin and cave are called Tom Brown's [sic] Cave. During the Civil War the cave was used as a part of an Underground Railroad system which smuggled slaves to Canada and freedom.

Many people that have visited the cave have sworn that they have heard

<sup>23</sup> Bartling, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

the joyous singing of the slaves. The singing is caused by the wind blowing through the crevices of the tunnel and it caused a low moaning sound which gives the effects of Negro singing.

Whatever is or is not the "historicity" of the John Brown Cabin and Cave, it is clear that considerable folklore has sprung up about them. The cabin was owned by Edward D. Bartling, recently deceased, from the 1880's till 1948. In his pamphlet history of it, *John Henry Kagi and the Old Log Cabin Home* (1938, 1940, 1943), he gives many facts but there are many omissions and he is vague concerning essentials. The cabin may fairly be called John Brown's Cabin in these days, I suppose, for it is now a small John Brown Museum; but John Brown never lived in it nor controlled it, may never have visited it, and it seems unlikely that slaves were ever in it during his lifetime. If there were it could have been but once, that in the expedition of the year of Harper's Ferry, 1859, provided that Mayhews had left it by that time. Even if the Mayhews were no longer occupants as early as 1857, Brown had no fugitive slaves with him to house there in his Nebraska visit of that year. It seems certain that no reliance may be placed on statements such as that in the *Federal Guide to Nebraska* ("Here John Brown of Ossawatimic had runaway slaves . . . A score of fugitive slaves at a time were secreted in the dungeon rooms,") or that in Bartling's pamphlet ("During the troublesome days following the Missouri Compromise John Brown and his followers aided hundreds of slaves to escape from Missouri,") or that of N. C. Abbott in his sympathetic and well written newspaper article ("There is no doubt that John Brown brought hundreds of slaves to Nebraska on their way north").

### III. CAVES OF THE NIOBRARA REGION

The upper Niobrara river of northeast Nebraska, called *L'Eau Qui Court*, "Running Water" by early French explorers and traders, flows onward through the sandhill region beyond Valentine in Cherry County till it reaches the Missouri in Knox County on the border of South Dakota. Mari Sandoz, native and laureate of the sandhill country, has supplied lore of several caves of the so-called Nebraska Panhandle and eastward. The caves of the region are usually of sandstone with strong limestone characteristics and soft formations beneath. Buffalo Springs Cave and Fly Speck Billy's Cave, for instance, are in sandstone.

*Buffalo Springs Cave*

Miss Sandoz has given me the following account of this cave. She recalls mention of it, she says, somewhere in anthropological literature of the Sioux, but we are unable to identify the place.

"Old timers used to tell of seeing buffalo herds hit the dry bed of the Platte in late summer looking for water. Finding no water but smelling it underground, the great herds milled around on the sandbars until it welled up around their hoofs. These buffalo springs, as they were called there, were common and temporary, but Deer Creek which flows north of the sandhills into the Niobrara river, starts in a cave that the Indians say was made by the buffalo. It seems that in the Great Dry Time, long before the White Man came, there had been no rain for so many moons that the people were dying of thirst and hunger, the rivers just dusty gullies and the thirsty buffalo gaunt as the empty parfleches in the tipis. When it seemed as if everything but the buzzards must die, an old buffalo cow threw up her head as though she smelled something, and led off into sandhills, the weak herds struggling after as fast as they could; the Indians too. At a sandy spot against a big hill, the cow stopped and the herds milled around her, bellowing and pawing, until suddenly water came up around their hoofs. By the next morning the buffalo spring had washed back under the hill, making a cave, the water boiling up strong and clear and cold and flowing away in a creek that found its way to the dry bed of the river, the first water there for months.

"After that other springs appeared and soon it was raining again, the Dry Time almost forgotten. But the Indian youths went over to that hill for their puberty fastings that were to bring them the guiding vision if they lay long enough on the blown-out top in sun and darkness. Afterward they came down and drank the water from the cave and made their sweat lodge with the scrub willows that had sprung up. The Indians brought their sick and injured here too, for the medicine water from the cave. My father used to tell us of hunting deer with one of his old Ogalalla Sioux friends who wouldn't let him shoot any deer they found drinking at the little stream where it left the cave or resting in the buck brush near by. Not even if they were short of meat.

"There is a story that when Conquering Bear was shot in the Grattan fight down on the Platte river in 1854, the Indians tried

to get him to Buffalo Springs Cave, certain that he would not die if he could be bathed in the river. They reached the Niobrara and moved down it as fast as their gravely wounded chief could endure, but when they were within a day's travois travel, the old man could go no farther."

*Road Agent's or Fly Speck Billy's Cave*

According to Mari Sandoz pretty much the whole Panhandle country of Northwest Nebraska has been searched over and dug into for hidden gold stolen from Black Hills stages back in the '70's and '80's by road agents, or, as easterners would call them, highwaymen. "Usually," she says, "the amount named for the buried caches is \$300,000, and sometimes the thieves were said to have been three men, perhaps including a not very heroic robber called Fly Speck Billy. They were said to have hidden out in a cave in the Niobrara bluffs and to have fallen to quarreling among themselves over the division of the gold. Sometimes one or two, or even all three of the men died, it was said, from the shooting resulting from the quarrel. In any case the gold was always assumed to be buried a short distance from the cave, either before the fight or afterward by the surviving. The marker by which the place could be recognized later was a line of three small pine trees standing like horsebackers along the top of the bluff above. There were three such trees not far from the place Old Jules homesteaded in 1884. By then there had been regular invasions of treasure hunters. After two of the three trees had been cut down, perhaps by some settler needing the poles, the substantial stumps and the remaining tree seemed to serve very well as a lure for the shovel men.

"There was a cave too within half a mile of our place and this was supposedly the place of the quarrel. Mostly the digging was between the cave and the trees, not on our land. But my father used to go up to watch a while, with his Winchester along, of course, since he never left the house without it. Usually the men reached nervously for their revolvers when he suddenly appeared beside them. He used to tell of these encounters and laugh so hard he choked. 'Hell, go ahead. People have been digging here ever since I came to the country,' he usually told them. But not once did any of them take him up on his invitation to come down to the house for supper.

"The diggings usually blew in before many months, or, if they were deep enough to endanger stock, somebody would go up and throw enough dirt into them to make them safe. But the cave was cool and moist and a fine place for the boys of the region to explore, and for picnickers to go to or to flee to in a shower. Often at night there were lights there; matches struck, or even a fire started that was shielded inside but somehow reflected a little into the dark. The more superstitious and fanciful saw ghosts around there late at night, from the road of course. The dead men haunting their booty, it was said. Several times men talked of utilizing them in the search for the \$300,000, but it didn't work out. Several times, too, fleeing bad men were said to be hiding there, and the local joke for a time was to elect the most timid man of the community constable and then tell him to go arrest the hideouters in Billy's cave. For a while a local chicken thief used the cave to hide his loot, and for several years afterward the cave stank in bad weather and was full of chicken feathers. As late as 1942 I received letters from people still hopeful about Fly Speck Billy's Cave as the key to the lost gold. I often wondered how anyone could be certain that, if the treasure was ever there, it hadn't been dug up and carried away, say, by the two men who came poling a raft down the river, with maps and compass, a big bull dog, and two 30-30 rifles.

"The last time I saw the cave was in 1931. It had fallen in, making a washed gully, but there were some rather recent diggings around it, with a lot of wind-exposed potsherds scattered over the turned-up earth; evidence of a much earlier occupancy than Fly-Speck Billy's or anybody else's with \$300,000 of Black Hills gold."

There are stories of the cave where the body of Crazy Horse, the Sioux chief was said to have been hidden for about a month after he was killed at Fort Robinson in September, 1877. Memory of the site of this cave, if there was one, has been lost. In the Crawford and Crow Butte regions in Sioux County are several caves said to be Indian hideouts. Doc Middleton's cave, supposedly his secret headquarters, is in the Niobrara river canyons north of O'Neill. Doc (David C.) Middleton was a cattle rustler, gambler, ex-convict, and performer in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show. He died in a county jail in Wyoming where he was confined for bootlegging. And of course there is a Jesse James cave farther east in

Knox County, beyond the mouth of the Niobrara, where he is said to have concealed himself when he lived there with Indians. This is probably to be associated with Devil's Nest near Crofton. This region of rough meadow and woodland was described in the journal of Lewis and Clark who camped here in 1804. Calvin Ravenscroft of Kennedy in Cherry County reports that on the Snake river where it flows into the Niobrara is a cave, now cemented over to some extent, in which was said to live a man who thought he had discovered perpetual motion. He shut himself in the cave to try to perfect his machine.

#### IV. OTHER CAVES

##### *Big Bear Hollow*

East of Winnebago and near the northern end of Memorial Park in Thurston County is a wooded indentation of special interest discussed in 1934 by Ora Russell of Decatur.<sup>24</sup> It is surrounded by hills and sheer cliffs of white Dakota sandstone. According to a fairly well-known legend, in a cave in one of these hills lived Big Bear, a mysterious creature half man and half bear, given to descending on Indian villages and carrying away women folk through magic power. Big Bear was protected by other black bears invested with magic against which the arrows of the Indians were futile. Once he stole an Indian girl who was on her honeymoon with her husband. The latter trained two young bears as ferocious fighters. Against these, Big Bear's protectors lost their magic. Big Bear himself was killed by the Indian and Indians again hunted in the hollow.

##### *Barada Cave and Robbers' Cave*

Barada Cave not far from Falls City is a hollowed out place under a limestone cliff, made by the action of water. Tradition has it that this cave sheltered horse-thieves. Its name comes from the small town of Barada which was named from an early settler, Antoine Barada (1807-1885), about whom legends and tall tales of his great strength have grown up. Robbers' Cave is on this side of Holy Fireplace Point near the Winnebago Indian agency in Thurston County. It is now only a small recess in the bluff over-

<sup>24</sup> Lincoln Journal and Star, December 9, 1934.

looking the Missouri river. The *Federal Guide to Nebraska* describes it as once the hideout of river bandits: "When an unsuspecting trapper was seen floating his season's catch down the river, the bandits would assail him and take his furs. At one time the opening of the cave formed a right angle and it was necessary to crawl on hands and knees to enter it. Now erosion and the destructive work of vandals have changed it. The James brothers are said to have evaded capture on one occasion by hiding in this cave after attempting to rob a bank in Northfield, Minnesota."<sup>25</sup>

### *Dripping Fork Cave*

Dripping Fork Cave, on the Platte, mentioned in John D. Hunter's *Manners and Customs of Several Indian Tribes West of the Mississippi* (Philadelphia, 1823), may not have been in Nebraska. No records or traces of it are now to be found. Despite its picturesque name, Hunter's reference to it is the only one that remains.

### *Ponca Cave*

The so-called Ponca Cave, the creation of two imaginative newspaper men, has been given considerable space in the Nebraska press. There were a few columns about it in the *Lincoln Sunday Star* of July 5, 1925, under the heading "Ponca Residents Recall Discovery of Cave of Prehistoric Beasts and Plants." The authors were Harry I. Peterson and William Huse, the latter the historian of Dixon County of which Ponca is the county seat. Their tall tale was repeated in the *Lincoln Sunday Journal and Star*, March 28, 1948, twenty-three years later.

Ponca is in northeast Nebraska, near where the Missouri river rounds the corner bordering South Dakota and Iowa. About 1915 fossil remains such as shark teeth and turtle shells were uncovered there, and a large fossil fish, now in a Chicago Museum, was blasted from the bluffs along the river. Local legends and tales seem to have started up after this event; Messrs. Huse and Peterson's tale is the tallest. They associated their story with no specific site at Ponca but claimed that it had been lost. Their yarn tells of vast caverns, prehistoric skeletons and gigantic fossilized animals be-

<sup>25</sup> Federal Writers Project, *op. cit.*, p. 263.

neath the northern part of Dixon County. It narrates the marvelous subterranean travels of "Professor Jeremiah Perrigoue, who liked geology and liked to dig along the bluffs for fossils, minerals and petrifications."

In 1876, Perrigoue found a great hole or an abandoned mine shaft 85 feet deep. He went through a fissure in the rock about 150 yards, then turned sharply to the left. Below him he saw to his amazement a gigantic cavern, a room supported by enormous trees reaching to 300 feet, their leaves turned into a canopy of stone. In this ancient forest he found petrified worms, a gigantic bird, terrible reptiles, a pterodactyl, dinotherium, megatherium, plesiosaur, ichthyosaurus, and palcotherium. Some of these creatures seemed to have been engaged in a death struggle before their demise. Other features of the great cavern were a subterranean river and a waterfall. Perrigoue penetrated more than two miles from the entrance and spent more than two days before retracing his steps. Finally, "Near the entrance where he had enlarged the fissure he encountered the dread fire-damp, and to his utter horror he saw the gauze of his miner's lamp had taken fire and was shooting up flames. In desperation he tried to extinguish them and finding it impossible he hurled the lamp far from him and scrambled up the shaft. He had barely reached the upper world before a terrible explosion heaved the ground, the shaft disappeared and this extraordinary sarcophagus was eternally sealed."

### *Shelter Caves*

Shelter caves, the once-inhabited homes of subterranean earth-lodge dwellers, have been found in many parts of the country, in the Ozarks, for instance, and in West Texas. Dr. Earl H. Bell, formerly anthropologist at the University of Nebraska, discovered a number of these in the 1930's in Cheyenne and Morrill counties, and there are shelter caves along the Platte and the Republican rivers also. These have been little individualized, have had little prominence, and little lore has arisen about them. They have not been taken into account in this paper, a paper intended to emphasize folklore rather than archaeology, geology, or tribal history.

This ends my present list of Nebraska caves and my account of the lore associated with them. It is not intended to be exhaustive even if my space permitted it. No doubt there are more caves



than those noted here that deserve recording, but they have had little publicity, or only local publicity. I have tried to include all those that are best known.

Cave lore seems to me a timely subject just now, when we are reminded daily that we live in the atomic age and may all eventually have to take shelter underground and become cave dwellers.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> A National Speleological Society was established in 1939, to stimulate interest in caves and to record the findings of explorers and scientists within and without the Society. Properly enough it subordinates folklore to adventure, discovery and scientific findings. Its tenth Bulletin, 1948, initiates in its 136 pages the treatment of the caves of a single state, Texas, a state peculiarly rich in caves of special interest and importance which has had less attention hitherto than it deserves.

# *EDUCATIONAL*

## THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT IS NOT

### I

Is discussion of what constitutes the history of a literature necessary these days? One's first impulse is to respond with a decided negative. We have preoccupied ourselves more or less consciously with literary history since the eighteenth century. Is there need, at this date, to ask what the subject should involve? One would think not. Yet the files of educational periodicals and the discussions at pedagogical meetings and scholarly gatherings afford ample ground for the inference that the mind of the average teacher is far from clear on the subject. And those teachers who do seem to have clear ideas, sometimes very positive ideas, often go quite astray in their premises. This seems to be especially true of critics of the value of the subject for the student. They are ready with a mass of criticism which is largely beside the point, since the kind of thing which they criticize is not properly literary history at all, nor desirable as a substitute for it. That their objections are, in any degree, valid is owing to a mistaken conception of the nature of literary history.

## II

Reversing the order suggested in my title, let us consider first what the history of English literature is not.

1. It is not a survey, in chronological order, of the lives of noted English authors, as many ardent critics seem to hold—justified, it may be, by the fact that a considerable number of teachers of the subject so handle their courses. Its primary concern is not with the dates of births and deaths and of publications. That instructor of whom one writer complains who spent two of his three periods for the poetry of Shelley on the facts of Shelley's life was not teaching the poetry of Shelley, nor was he contributing very much to the student's knowledge of the literary history of the nineteenth century. Are lectures on the lives of authors still widely given in our leading educational institutions as a substitute for lectures on the content of their significant works? It would seem so, to judge from articles and discussions pointing out the futility for the average student of memorizing barren external facts connected with writers of books. Such memorizing has its cultural value; but courses giving central prominence to biographical facts are courses in biography, not in the history of literature.

2. It is not a course in memorizing lists of writings of major authors. This too may have a certain cultural value and may deserve place in higher or special study; but lists of writings are no more the primary concern of the history of literature than are the facts of authors' biographies. Those who point out the inadequacy of such memorizing as a means of contributing to the student's understanding of, or love for, literature have fair grounds for their position. The teacher who makes the enumeration of Swift's writings, or of Charles Lamb's, the outstanding feature of the time he spends on these authors is not giving his time to literary history but rather to cataloguing or to bibliography.

3. It is not study of "homes and haunts" of authors, nor of anecdotes about them, nor of printed criticism of their writings. Scenes, landscape-lore, topographical considerations, comment, bits of gossip about authors, passages of criticism concerning them, arrived at secondhand—all these may have subsidiary interest, but they are not the subject itself. There are many who seem to look upon literature as a sort of glorified gossip about authors and their works. But no mere enumerations, or memorizing of external facts

of any kind, constitute the "history" of a literature, nor should they be allowed to take the place of such a history.

The biographical, bibliographical, and other matters mentioned may have a subsidiary interest; but when they are given primary interest it is at the expense of the subject itself. Those who look upon literary history as a maze of facts and dates are dealing with the husks of literature, not with literature itself. They are lingering on the outside of their subject, not entering into it.

### III

What, then, is the history of literature, now that we have had something to say as to what it is not? The history of a literature is primarily the history of the *content* of that literature, its *subject-matter*. The real literary historian has to do with the intellectual fibre of literature. He deals with books and their implicit philosophy as a product of the human mind. He gets beyond the details of external facts and presents a history of ideas and feelings. He is concerned also with the forms assumed by it and the modes governing it in varying periods. To accumulate a minute lore of small facts and allusions, or to consider problems of authorship, or to be able to "place" a vast number of minor writers and to narrate lists of works—how can these be a proper substitute for the experience of *following, in its dominant ideas and genetic connection, the literature of a great nation?* Biographical or bibliographical or anecdotal lore cannot take the place of first-hand acquaintance with those profound currents of feeling, those governing ideas that, as recorded in books, from generation to generation have guided the destinies of men. Literature deals with thought and feeling, and literary history deals with the history of this thought and this feeling and of the forms in which they have found expression. The literary historian operates with ideas and points of view, not solely with externals. The history of literature ought to be a conscious branch of the history of culture; and so far as possible it ought to be handled with the whole range of a people's ideas and ideals as its background. The subject often profoundly awakens the student who enters into it in the right spirit; and it is one which may very materially strengthen his intellectual grip.

Adequate study of literature always involves the study of literary history. The mere *enjoyment* of literature belongs to any reader;

it is available for all. But genuine *study* of literature implies an examination of it from the beginning, of its origins, and of the influences which have molded it. In something of the temper of the scientist one surveys it impartially, watches it, and records what it is like, what happens to it. The serious student tries above all to establish what is true. He is interested in the ugly as well as the attractive. In the end this procedure always makes the enjoyment of literature the stronger. The more you know of anything in all its phases the more interesting it becomes. Those who *study* literature find in the long run keener pleasure in it than those who read only to be entertained. The "epicure of culture," to borrow the phrase of a French critic, selects only what suits his taste. He is without sense of responsibility in his reading and cares only for aesthetic appreciation. He reads only for pleasure and only the things that please him. He is indifferent to variety and without a sense of relationship. But literature is not really the matter of a few outstanding names but of the whole activity. Its history demands, not the selection of a few authors, however representative, but attention to relation and proportion. The background for masterpieces need not claim more attention than do the masterpieces, but it should not be left out of account. In history proper the older historian reviewed heroic men in succession and recorded their deeds. But modern historical study has freed itself from the yoke of presenting only special names and events. It seeks to picture the average man and the general activity as well as the personality and the career of the hero. So modern literary history no longer presents only special authors in procession or contents itself with examining the product of individual minds. It is interested in the general mind as well. It registers the level of the common book, and by so doing makes clearer the altitude attained by the masterpiece.

In summary, then, the literary historian is not a biographer, nor a cataloguer, nor a retailer of anecdotes, nor are his duties purely descriptive, nor again is it his business to impart entertaining miscellaneous information. It is for him to show that literature embodies the history of the human mind; that it is the direct and necessary expression of national life; that its unity is not that of a library but of a living body; and that one will fail to understand well any part of it unless one understands the relation of that part to the rest.

## IV

Does a course in the history of English literature belong in secondary schools? After reading diverse testimonies on the subject one is inclined to say, Only when it is in the hands of the right teacher and for selected pupils. Sound and wide cultural equipment and catholic sympathies are needed on the part of the teacher who is to "float" it. It is easier to interest a class, says Professor Irving Babbitt, in Rostand than in Racine; the latter requires the stronger man. So teachers who hold their classes spellbound with Stevenson or Kipling may do little with a panorama or "survey" course. Similarly there are differences in pupils. Classes in general history are common in high schools and, it is presumed, succeed; but the history of human events is more tangible and more easily followed than the history of human ideas, feelings, and tastes, as recorded in literary monuments. Some "survey" courses, to adopt the designation of the average course in literary history, succeed signally. There is evidence enough of this. One can point to many secondary-school teachers who have interested their pupils intensely in chronological survey work and have made it very valuable—the good result upon their pupils cannot be missed. But other teachers and their pupils are restive and skeptical.

Does such a course succeed in colleges and universities? Here again testimony varies. The rigorous course in the subject, with insistence upon minutiae and exact details, belongs properly in the graduate school. It is pretty widely customary to offer the course, subject to various adjustments, to beginning college students of literature; but its givers often feel uncertainty, and the uncertain teacher usually produces an uncertain class. Judging from the material at hand, it looks as though the historical introductory course is successful and popular in women's colleges and girls' schools and rather unpopular and unsuccessful in men's institutions. But, on the other hand, more attention is paid to careful pedagogy of the subject and the work is usually more attractively planned in women's institutions. In coeducational institutions the subject claims, like the study of languages (of history, too, sometimes), a preponderance of women students among its followers. In general, the feminine undergraduate in this subject, as in so many others, when comparative records are available, appears to be the more serious student.

This much is certain, I think. Those for whom English literature is a special subject, who "major" in it, can ill afford to miss an adequate historical survey course. The dilettantes, those who crave to be entertained, who set up the idol of play, and to whom the sweep of view, the shifting currents of thought, the generalization, and the scrutiny of a variety of phenomena are unattractive, may well be let off from taking it. But it is basic where there is to be scholarly knowledge, catholic taste, and valid criticism. Where you come upon the student who has not had such a course you are pretty sure to come upon one who has no sound larger ideas about literature, who is sure that the contemporary represents the last word in literary art, who has read little that is of lasting importance, and who is confirmed in a haphazard egoism about books. Even for those who profess to care only about "living literature" the past is a good approach to their favorite reading. To be grounded in the literature of the past, to have acquired a panoramic view of the past, brings the most sophisticated attitude of mind with which to approach the present. Granted a foundation knowledge of older books and, for the great body of students, contemporary literature may safely be left to take care of itself. Why make work for them, in their class periods, of that which should be their play outside? Students who care to read are bound to read something out of hours, or when they have left their school work behind; and the literature which is immediately contemporary is that which they may be counted upon to seek.

1917

## THE VALUE OF ENGLISH LINGUISTICS TO THE TEACHER<sup>1</sup>

### I

What is included in the usual course in the history of the English language? Presumably some teachers emphasize the translation of older monuments, some emphasize training in etymologies, some phonetic changes, and some changes in language structure and forms. Some offer courses in the hope of fostering a more accurate use of language, some because of the discipline to be gained from the study of language in the abstract, and some in order to afford the necessary preparation for the scholar. All have in mind the development, on the part of the student, of a scientific attitude toward language.

Any teacher is the better who has background in the subject which he teaches, and he teaches it the more inspiringly and the more validly for having that background. The exhaustive study of philological details belongs to the advanced student and to the specialist. For the average student of the language, it is of less importance to "settle *Hoti's* business" than to understand the relation of existing linguistic forms to the language in general, and to acquire a deepened linguistic consciousness. Except for the ultra-

<sup>1</sup> Read before the College Section of the National Council of English Teachers, St. Louis, 1924.



specialist, the consideration of a multiplicity of details (though command of details and accuracy in details are always important) may well be subordinated to the establishment of main lines and the opening up of new fields. A main benefit of the historical study of English is that it enhances linguistic sensitiveness and brings a wider linguistic horizon.

The historical student of language develops a perspective beyond that of the ordinary student. Many teachers and students have little perspective back of Shakespeare; certainly little back of Chaucer. One is familiar with a type of teacher of literature who casually and rather patronizingly groups together Chaucer and Shakespeare and Pope as "old authors." In the same way, many teachers think of anything behind the language of the nineteenth century as "Old English," without discrimination and without a sense of development. Surely, in any subject the cultivation of a sense of chronology is desirable. Those who teach present-day English can do so more broadly and more accurately if they have a knowledge of beginnings as an approach to the contemporary, much as those who teach current history do so to better advantage when they know something of the past.

In general both the teacher and the students need the idea of development in language. The doctrine of evolution finds illustration in the study of language as well as in the study of sciences such as zoology and botany. A curious assumption that language is static is still to be found sometimes among teachers as among the laity. Many words which were in doubtful usage when they went to college are standard now; yet they bar their pupils from employing them. Many idioms which were not accepted then are accepted now, and many which were accepted once are now outworn. The same is true of many pronunciations. The static teacher persists in the usages he was taught in his school days and rejects their successors. The teacher of any phase of language work who is to handle his subject in the best way should have had experience with the evolutionary point of view, whether dealing with general principles or with details. As suggested in the opening paragraph, he needs a scientific attitude toward language.

## II

There are four leading phases of the study of the English language to which the idea of development may be applied. They will

be reviewed in the following pages and considerable illustrative matter introduced, in an attempt to show the living interest of the subject. They concern vocabulary, spelling, grammatical forms, and pronunciation.

1. It helps any teacher to have followed the growth of the English vocabulary. The capabilities of the language are better appreciated by one who has reviewed the strata entering into it and discriminated between the fundamental vernacular elements and the elements borrowed from other languages. It brings sounder judgment and larger tolerance to realize that word-meanings are not stationary, and that the number and the kinds of words we employ are not stationary. There is an intensely human interest in words. Their life reflects the life of the race, and the customs and thoughts from which they have arisen. Shifts in vocabulary are always under way. It is of value culturally to survey the growth of our speech from its varied sources, to win sound ideas of the birth and death of words, and of the transformations they undergo and the reasons for these transformations. Even those who prefer to take into account only the living language may profit by experience with linguistic analysis. They will find their interest in words and their powers of observation enhanced. To pause for concrete illustration, how interesting, to the trained student, are the chief living sources for the replenishment of language, other than borrowing.

(1) New words may be floated by the individual who coined them, as *Folklore* (instead of "popular antiquities") by W. J. Thoms in 1846, or *constituency* by Macaulay, or *hypnotism* by Dr. Braid, or *international* by Bentham.

(2) New words may come from proper names, as *zeppelin*, *pasteurize*, *silhouette*, *boycott*.

(3) They may arise from the shortening for convenience of longer words, as *curio* from *curiosity*, *van* from *caravan*, or *patter* from *paternoster*.

(4) They may arise through arbitrary blending, as *electrocute* from *electric* and *execute*, or the town name *Calexico* from *California* and *Mexico*. This form of word-coinage is relied on heavily in these days, in the language of commerce. Witness *Sealpackerchief* for a sealed packet of pocket handkerchiefs, or *Sanigenic* mop.

(5) They may arise through reduction, as *ma'am* from the Latin *mea domina*, a term of address which, in the most drastic reduction I know, becomes the *m* of *Yes'm*.

(6) They may arise through misconception or carelessness. For example, will *laundered* pass into *laundried*, as it seems to be trying to do? What will be the fate of the four forms of *alumnus*, masculine and feminine, singular and plural? The American Association of Collegiate Alumnae is said to have

changed its name partly because of the impossibility it experienced in getting newspapers and the public to reproduce its name accurately.

(7) New meanings may arise for old words, floated by slang usage, or by popular stage plays or by vaudeville or by films. How curious is the history of the word *sheik* which has popularized itself in a new meaning before our eyes, as it were, or the developments of the word *date* from the meaning "a point of time" to the significance of a "social engagement" and now into an agent-noun "escort." "My date was late last evening."

(8) They may be coined arbitrarily to name some new invention, or they may be brought in from some foreign language. Witness new words like *radio*, *phonograph*, *garage*, or the popularization in recent times of the suffix *-fest* from the German, in the making of new compounds.

(9) They may come through interchange of the parts of speech, as infinitives which become nouns, e.g., *divide*, *cut*, *burn*, *meet*, and recently *sing*. Sometimes these infinitives transformed into nouns are found mostly in the plural, as *eats*, *weeps*, *feeds*, *smokes*. Even an adjective may become a verb, as to *wireless*. *Like* is trying hard to become a conjunction.

(10) They may be built from old words by the employment of suffixes, new or old, as our recent journalistic *clubster*, *speedster*, *swimmist*, *writtist*, or our new feminines in *-ette*, or *-ine*, like *slackerette*, *actorine*. I have heard the overworked *pep*, itself a shortening of *pepper*, extended to a verb, to *pepify*, and even to a noun of action, "Our football team needs *pepification*."

(11) The meanings of standard words may change—often slowly and almost unnoticeably, as *prone* is changing from the opposite of *supine* to the meaning merely of *flat*. Other words that have changed or are changing from their literary meanings are *fix*, *nice*, *smart*.

(12) Standard words may be used in dialect ways. *It* is not only a pronoun, neuter in gender, but in games it has also a noun function, as *it* in "You're *It*" of the game of tag. In another usage, a slang usage, *it* means simpleton or booby. *Who* and *which* are taking on comparatives, in the English of the films, "Than whom none is *whomer*," "Than which nothing is *whicher*." *Worse* is used as a positive, "Not so *worse*," and *much* as a noun, "Not such a much."

2. It is also of interest to watch the changes in grammatical forms in the light of parallel changes which have made their way in the past. One doubts whether there will be in the future many important changes in pronouns or adjectives or in verb formations. Our vocabulary will always be undergoing changes but probably our language in its main lines will remain for centuries very much what it is now. Literary culture allows tolerance in vocabulary, but for grammar its tendency is strongly conservative. The making of our grammar, unlike the making of our vocabulary, is probably very nearly a finished process. Nevertheless some changes are always going on in the inflectional forms of words. For example the past participle *broken* has lost its *-n* in one meaning and *broke* is

now with us to stay with a meaning of its own. The optative is disappearing or has gone. It is conceivable that *me*, *us*, *him*, might sometime achieve standard usage in the nominative, as happened long ago with the dative-accusative *you*. As for nouns, the historic plural *folk* has a new form with *-s*, which arose alongside it, i.e., *folks*. One even hears in these days the double plural *folkses*, and there have been attempts to create therefrom an adjective *folksy*. *Movieses* and *toeses* are sometimes heard, new double plurals like the now orthodox *traces*, *truces*, *bodices*, *kine*, *six-pences* or *children*. One hears attempts at new singulars, like a *corp*, a *ho*—no more eccentric than were a *pea* and a *cherry*. Occasionally plurals are treated as singulars, a *woods*, a *ways*. The latter locution is well on its way toward acceptance and is no more illogical than the now accepted *a means*, *a links*, *a play-grounds*, *a shambles*, *an amends*. *Curriculum*s is now superseding *curricula*, and *cactus*es, *cacti*. *Data* and *insignia* are trying to be singulars. Have these phenomena educational interest? The cultural is what enriches life, and increased interest in human speech enriches life. It may be contended that matters of linguistic change belong to culture, along with changes in taste in reading matter and in art or music, and in their techniques.

The historical study of English does a genuine service in lighting up the subject of grammar, whether the matter involved be our modes of forming noun plurals, our patterns of verb conjugations, our comparisons of adjectives, or matters like the existence of the adverbial *the*, or the *to* infinitive, or curious single expressions like "a great many men," "Our Father *which* art in heaven," or dialect expressions like "That is *ourn*," or "*Them* books."

3. The historical study of spelling is also of value to the student of language. Differences between British and American spellings are to be taken into account in a few instances, as in the spelling of *honor*, *labor*, etc., *judgment*, *controller*, *inquiry*, *jail*, *tire*, *check*, *gypsy*, which may be British *honour*, *labour*, etc., *judgement*, *comp-troller*, *enquiry*, *gaol*, *tyre*, *cheque*, *gipsy*. There are Renaissance respellings like *debt*, *doubt*, *victuals*. There are words which have their spellings from one dialect and the pronunciations from another like *busy*, which is spelled with *u* but pronounced with *i*, or the place-name suffix *-bury*, which is spelled with *u* but pronounced with *e*; and there are words which owe their orthography to one foreign language and their pronunciation to another, like

*colonel*, which has its written form from the Italian and its spoken form from the Spanish. Undue reverence for traditional spellings vanishes when one has followed erroneous respellings like those of *ghost* and *aghost*. There is much of everyday interest in the history of orthographical forms. What are the permanent traces of the late simplified spelling movement? They grow fainter in the standard language but have made a permanent impression on the language of advertisement, and therefore may later affect the standard language. Witness plurals like *trunx*, *chix*, *inx*, or the vogue of *k*, "We Klean Klothes Kwick," "Klassy Kollege Kut Klothes"; or simplifications like "R U Going to Robbers' Cave?", "U-Rub-It-In Ointment," "Will U C Smith for Paper-Hanging?" or "Wear-U-Well Shoes"; or the vagaries like 'nuf sed, tuf, crool, likker, fizzical culture, of the columnists.

4. To be taken into account likewise is the matter of pronunciation. Here also the conception of the development of language is needed by the teacher. Spoken language shows even more rapid evolution than does written language. Pronunciation never stands still. Sound-shifting is going on constantly, for people are not alike, and they live under different conditions. A new generation never speaks exactly as the old, but develops slight variations. The same people do not always speak in the same way, nor is any one sound the same in the mouths of many people, nor always the same in the utterance of one person. In one period of years several usages may be allowable, one of which may in time prevail over others. These changes in the spoken language come gradually and unconsciously but they are inevitable and the teacher should realize it, else he is likely to be too rigid in his positions, and too servile to the authority of older dictionaries and orthoepies. Conservative dictionaries might insist upon *per'empto'ry* long after most speakers said *peremp'tory*, or demand *Wistar'ia* when most speakers say *Wisti'ria*; or fail to realize that *ally*, *survey*, *details*, are trying to change their accent to the first syllable as did *balcony*, which in the eighteenth century had its accent on the middle syllable. They urge us to say *lit'erature'* when the academic world says *lit'erature*, slurring the last syllable. One teacher (British) is said to have wished her pupils to say *moun'tain'*, *foun'tain'*, because she thought that "justice should be done to the last syllable of these words."

Unless guided to a realization of it, many speakers do not know that British and American English are no longer identical in pronunciation. Many words, e.g., *again*, *been*, *trait*, *schedule*, *squirrel*, *lieutenant*, *cantonment*, are pronounced in one way in this country and in another way in England.

A teacher who has developed a sense of proportion through the historical study of pronunciation, or through phonetics, is not the type of teacher to give hours of class-room time to inculcating a few pronunciations like "don't | you," or "Not | at | all," or to insistence on an "intermediate" *a* in *aunt*, while he does not mind the front vowel in parallel words like *can't* or *plant*. He does not exact an unvarying pronunciation for words like *advertisement*, *demonstrate*, *illustrate*, the accent of which has not yet assumed fixity as penultimate or antepenultimate; or for French loan-words like *buffet*, *début*, *menu*, *débris*, which hardly know as yet which direction they are to take. Some tolerance of diversity of usage is inevitable on the part of the skilled teacher of sounds. Within limits there is a mean between the deplorably careless and the pedantically precise. The teacher with the evolutionary point of view is likely to be a better guide than the teacher who has no resources beyond the pages of some orthoepy.

### III

Graduate or undergraduate students who expect to become teachers of English, especially teachers of grammar and composition, should have followed the history of their language from the period before the Norman Conquest onward, its inflections, the growth of the vocabulary, the changes in spelling and pronunciation—this for the sake of the sounder ideas they will acquire concerning language. Academic courses in the history of the mother tongue should be broad enough to afford experience in all these fields.

If there is not time enough in the collegiate courses as ordinarily given, time may well be spared from translation, which is so often the staple of such courses. For nearly all the significant Old and Middle English monuments and for Chaucer, excellent translations are now available. Translation is the phase of the study of older English in which the student requires least help. Further, when much time is given to translation, attention may well be paid to affording experience with a variety of literary types, both of poetry

and prose, rather than to the exhaustive study of one or two monuments, often those of least cultural significance. There is great value in gaining first-hand experience with the various types of writing which interested the mediaeval mind. Few believe in the kind of history of the language which is disconnected from the reading of texts, the kind which is preoccupied with a history in the abstract, without the practice-material of actual reading to bring experience and orientation. But the reading of older monuments is demanded also in courses in the history of literature, while linguistic experience comes only from courses in historical grammar, if it be had at all. Time should be allowed for the student to watch development, to map out the whole field of changes, even if it must be done with a certain sweep of impressionism. The development of the language should be faced fully and fairly. If the question be asked, can this field be covered in a year's course of perhaps three hours a week, my answer is that I think it quite possible, provided that the course in the history of the language accompanies a semester of reading of Old English texts and a semester of reading of Middle English texts or of Chaucer. Much indeed can be done, on the oral side of the language, merely through a course in phonetics. Language is something that we use every day. It concerns us all. The cultivation of a scientific attitude toward it is an important phase of the instruction in English in our higher institutions.

It should be clear that the teacher needs the background of older language history to find his way and to keep his linguistic balance, and (this should have special emphasis) to know how to use the dictionary wisely. Whoever has followed the history of the language in an adequate manner emerges less rigid and narrow in his views than the person who has waved away the older for the merely contemporary, or who cares only for the cross-sectional, not the longitudinal view. Such a teacher knows that if Dryden's prose style or Addison's be held up as models, as they still are by many, it must be with the caution that many of their idioms and some part of their vocabularies are of the past. What is desirable is not that Dryden's or Addison's styles be imitated or reproduced, but that styles be fostered which are as reasonable and timely and standard for our own day as were Dryden's and Addison's for their day. The teacher trained in linguistics knows that the extremes of contemporary vogue may not last long enough for it to be wise

for most writers to surrender to them. Such a teacher can steer a safe course between the Scylla of belated clinging to the outworn, and the Charybdis of undue faith in being up to the minute.

A very salutary thing, if it could be brought about, would be the destruction of the fear which is entertained by many teachers and students of courses in the history of the language, or in the study of older linguistic monuments. Many shrink with even more repugnance from archaisms in language than from obsolete modes of thought. They believe that grammatical courses have no bearing on the present. Intelligent teachers of language, like intelligent teachers of literature, concern themselves with both the older and the newer. They do not bury themselves in the past while studying the past, nor do they neglect and belittle it when dealing with the present. To do either is to leave the student half-educated and with narrowed outlook. Any teacher can use the living, no matter how far back may be the immediate material with which he deals. Collateral use of the contemporary, stimulation of interest in it, are possible at all times. They are indeed unavoidable for the well-equipped and enthusiastic teacher, whether of literature, history, or linguistics.

1925



## THE USE AND ABUSE OF THE CONTEMPORARY IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH<sup>1</sup>

### I

One can hardly glance through an educational journal or attend an educational program, and remain oblivious of the present tendency to advocate the use of the merely contemporary in curricula. Intelligent teachers of literature concern themselves with both the older and the newer; and they interest intelligent students in both. They do not bury themselves in the past, nor do they neglect and belittle it through exclusive preoccupation with the present. To do either is to leave the student half-educated and with narrowed outlook. This generalization may sound self-evident; yet a scrutiny of current pedagogical literature shows every divergence of opinion among educators. And particularly striking is the frequent present-day condemnation of teaching that has to do largely with older material. There was never a time when there was more public pressure for "results," nor when curricula were undergoing severer examination. But there is also a general disappointment at what teachers accomplish and there is surely a demand upon the teacher for a first inquiry as to whether we do not fail both in the types of our teaching and in the kind of intellectual material we attempt

<sup>1</sup> Read at the English sectional meeting of the Central Division of the Modern Language Association of America, at Chicago, December 29, 1920.

to handle. Of course we can not avoid disappointing those who expect "one hundred per cent results" from human material which is not "one hundred per cent" material, but we may perhaps correct a method of our own which surely falls far short of any one hundred per cent standard.

## II

Eternal vigilance is the price of such efficiency as we reach. No doubt it is salutary for us to listen to the voices raised in criticism of our selection of material, whether for grade school, secondary school, or college. Pleas are advanced such as the following, noted down from time to time from educational periodicals, or heard from platforms:

In the study of American literature, make the reading of Bryant, Longfellow, Whittier, auxiliary to the reading of poets like Vachel Lindsay, E. A. Robinson, Carl Sandburg.

Reject Shakespeare from the high-school curriculum; reject Milton's minor poems; reject pieces of the type of "The Lady of the Lake." They are "too ancient." Introduce poems like Neihardt's "Song of Hugh Glass."

Reject in general all but contemporary poetry, and "have little of that."

Reject from colleges the survey course in literature. "Boys are not interested in this course."

Introduce books by Harold Bell Wright into the curriculum, because "students like to read them." I have heard this plea several times from school principals and superintendents, after they found, by taking referendums, that he was the favorite author of those attending school.

Let a few typical sentences be quoted:

"Make place for the vital, powerful literature of to-day." "To the scrap-heap with the outworn monuments which clutter our curriculum." "Make the high school and college course in English practical and inspiring. Give the students that which stirs them."

A writer in the *Literary Review* of the New York *Evening Post* advocates the introduction of the poetry of Walter de la Mare into the schools. She says:

I want the children in my class to understand that they are living in a great age of poetry, that the best poetry since the seventeenth century is being

written now, in the time of which they are a part [Query: *Is this a great age of poetry?*].

In brief, invitations to attack the past are heard on every hand. Especially, in recent days, a tendency seems to be apparent to condemn the Victorian era. Even this—the era of Dickens, Thackeray, Eliot, Meredith, Hardy, Tennyson, Browning, Darwin, Spencer, Huxley—now belongs too far in the past. Recently I listened to a plea to take Carlyle from the class-room, since his teaching was “undemocratic.” Carlyle was “no democrat but believed in kings and was scornful of democracy.” “His works are not suitable material for study in a democratic era.”

It is obvious that no champion of emphasis upon the contemporary is needed. Those with strongest voices and most vigorous convictions who appear upon the platforms of the hour are on that side. There are more current attempts to stultify what man has accomplished in the past than there are attempts to do it justice.

### III

Surely the cheapening of education should not go too far. Any teacher of literature can and should use the living every day, no matter how far back may go the immediate material with which he is concerned. He can draw upon the present for analogies, for illustration of the working of laws, to show outcomes, or for ethical lessons. Older literary monuments and older language forms may always be connected with the living literature or the living language. This is possible from the first day's assignment in every course. Vital relation can be indicated, and the idea of the continuity of human knowledge be established. It is a mistake to believe that only current literature has importance for us. Human laws, motives, relations, repeat themselves from generation to generation. Collateral use of the contemporary, stimulation of interest in it, are possible at all times. They are, indeed, unavoidable for the well-equipped and enthusiastic teacher.

We are told that the dust gathers on the most vital of books. It does gather on them, but it is for the teacher to show how and why, and to do this he must relate the book to the present. When a teacher deals with books like Thackeray's “*Henry Esmond*,” Dickens's “*The Tale of Two Cities*,” Tennyson's “*Idylls*,” there are three ways in which a class may be led to read them. They may

be read in the light of the times they picture; that is, the readers must bridge a gulf of time and relate them to the period that produced them, i.e., read them in the light of history. Next, they may be read in relation to the times which produced them and for which they were written; that is, they may be read in the light of literary history. Last, they may be read in the light of contemporary literature, to determine where they stand now, as regards themes, ideals of character, institutions, descriptions, technique, popularity, appeal. For the amount of time expended, there is more educational value in such reading than in the reading of transient literature of today. The latter may be read in but one of these ways, the last; and much of the contemporary prose and verse now advocated for the curriculum will be forgotten before our generation has passed. To show the gains made by the human spirit in the lapse of time since a work was produced, involves scrutiny from the standpoint of the present. What is "vital and powerful in the literature of today" need not be neglected but may be made to loom the more conspicuously.

#### IV

There are three purposes to be served by education. For the secondary schools, where the bulk of the citizens of the next generation are to be reached, a main purpose must be the preparation of the young to perform their part in the duties of a democratic society. By means of secondary-school programs and secondary-school organization, the young people of America must be reached, to elevate American ideals and to improve American social and political conditions. Second, it is essential to keep the learning of the world alive. The torch must be carried on from generation to generation, and this demands the maintenance of learning in many fields, and the encouragement of the right persons to enter them. Not a generation may be missed. If civilization is to be maintained, learning must be kept alive, and when possible increased, and it must be handed on.

These thoughts are familiar. A third purpose served by education is less often emphasized. To learn as much as we can is worth while because it makes the world a more interesting place, and life in general more interesting. The educated man has palpable advantages of resourcefulness over the man who is not educated. This is reason enough for going to college, if there is opportunity,

quite apart from social or utilitarian considerations. The more fields of knowledge that attract us, the more subjects of which we know something, the better. From this point of view, collegiate training has value for those who expect to work, for those who expect a life of leisure, for those who have average intellectual gifts, or gifts below the average, as well as for those who are unusually endowed.

The very point in reading the selections assigned to students in schools is that they take their readers away from the present. If we are to be educated, not half-educated, we need to get outside our own time and place, and to read with other eyes. We read books to escape from our own world, to have vicarious experiences. It is hard to sympathize with the proposal now so often heard to take a referendum with regard to what interests the students, then to give them that. Rather is that what they need least to be given. The contemporary, the close at hand, they will read if they read at all. Nor is the caution amiss that what lies just about us we usually see out of focus. Over-emphasis upon the contemporary is abuse of it. Those who wish to limit the reading of the younger mainly to the close at hand are desirous not of educating but of half-educating them.

## V

To show that these remarks are not directed against windmills, let us return to some of the propositions currently made for changing the English curriculum:

A speaker whose hobby is sociology wishes the literature course made over so that students in high school and college may be "taught sociology through literature."

Another advocates the teaching of politics and ethics through literature.

A teacher whose hobby is fiction wishes various poetical monuments to be displaced to afford more time for contemporary novels and short stories.

Another teacher, whose hobby is the drama, wishes various types of literature (especially "ancient poetry") to be thrown out, and contemporary drama to be brought into the foreground.

Everybody advocates the teaching of democracy through literature, and the placing of emphasis on those monuments which ex-

emplify it. Much may be learned, however, regarding democracy by reading literature of directly opposite character, which will exemplify the gains which democracy has brought.

Another wishes local or regional feeling to be taught. Therefore the emphasizing of the work of local writers is desirable in the class-room. "Not only Americanize but localize."

Another thinks that the best way to make interesting an older story is to try to work it over in dramatic or scenario form, for "the students do care for these things." Some teachers ask their students to convert Tennyson's "Idylls" or Cooper's novels, and the like, into scenario form.

Others think that nineteenth-century poetry, certainly older poetry, should be supplanted by current poetry, though most of the latter will soon drop from prominent place. They wish their students to study Joyce Kilmer, Alan Seeger, Rupert Brooke, Alfred Noyes.

Here are a few class-room exercises and questions (collegiate, not secondary-school exercises) which show the drift of many present-day teachers:

"What is your opinion of the Willard-Dempsey prize-fight as the subject of a poem?" [From an examination in freshman literature.]

"Hand in the scansion of the verse in today's college paper." This was an exercise assigned to a freshman class which had reached the topic, meter. The verse in the issue of the college paper of that day was innocent of meter, and the time spent by the students in trying to endow it with metrical structure was time wasted. What is carefully analyzed is likely to be that which is best remembered; and what is remembered ought to be something worth while, not the trivialities of college doggerel.

"Bring to class pictures from contemporary magazine advertisements which will exemplify types of character."

"Bring to class words from contemporary slang that illustrate figurative language." As in the case of the preceding assignment, collateral illustration should be sufficient. As a main class-room exercise, both (however they might interest the students and enliven the class-room) are wasteful of time.

Especially are we urged to subordinate the teaching of literature to the reforming of society. This is an important aim; yet in an attempt to effectuate it along some of the lines laid out for us, the

real subject of a course might be lost. The following passage is from an article in a recent number of a pedagogical journal:

If teachers of English were to make a survey of the needs of the American people and were then to make a list and a classification of the ideals which, if made in common, would best meet these dominant needs, we should have a very good guide for the selection of literature. . . . Among these ideals which . . . must be made the driving forces of all Americans we find respect for property rights, chastity, monogamy, parental love, respect for age and womanhood, sympathy with suffering and affliction, self-sacrifice and self-denial, integrity, loyalty, friendship, cleanliness and personal purity, altruistic achievement, truth-loving, simplicity, work, health, initiative, independence, patriotism, national unity, local self-government, right use of property, ennobled ideals of sexual love, ambition of right types, peace and good will, unprejudiced observation and inductive thinking, scientific method, efficiency and expertness, respect for authority, and human brotherhood. . . . Parents send their children to school to be lifted up and inspired by such ideals. We English teachers can get from such a list a sense of relative values in our work that the old-time teacher . . . never attained.

The writer of that paragraph was mapping out an ambitious program for teachers of English.

## VI

There was never a time when thought and care and patient investigation so characterized the efforts of educators as they do today. There were never before so many well-equipped teachers; and there was never before so much exact experimentation to determine what may be wisest. The leaders in education are men who are sane and well advised. They have brought improvement in the past, and they will bring further improvement. One's sympathies are with the agitators, in their pressure for progress; even in their incessant shifts of emphasis and in their shifting catch-words which are launched, worked hard, then replaced. To realize the improvement which appears in the educational ideals of our own day, I have only to compare the papers I formerly heard from educators in my home state, papers on "Boxing the Compass," "Beyond the Alps Lies Italy," "The Harp of the Soul" (eloquent, but what they were about the hearers never knew), with the concrete and valuable papers to be heard on the same programs now. But one has moments of becoming deafened at the clamor of the ultra-modernists, and wearied at their jargon. It is true that those who repeat the jargon loudest and with the greatest limitation of outlook, those

who are most active in glorifying man's present activities and stultifying his past, are not the real leaders. They catch their thunder at second hand and never fail somehow to mishandle it. But it is they who are noisiest. Their reiterations have no soothing effect upon sensitive nerves, and they are likely to induce impulses to reaction.

Sometimes it would afford a pleasant change to hearers to listen to a plea for the study of literature for literature's sake, if such pleas are still made; to a plea for the study of literature as a record of human thought and feeling, and as a storehouse of the past. A book unknown might as well not exist. If we neglect the books of the past, the key to the past is lost. Only from the reading of the monuments of many periods can the types, laws, history, and changing character of human thought and feeling be illustrated. Of the divergent possibilities for the curriculum, advocated in these post-war days, the tendency to introduce the contemporary into the class-room needs no reinforcement. There is need, however, of reinforcing reverence for and sympathetic interpretation of man's accomplishment in the past.

*1920*



## GRADUATE WORK FOR WOMEN<sup>1</sup>

### I

Were this meeting for the discussion of graduate work for women a meeting taking place a few decades ago, a leading question to receive attention would be "Are women able to do graduate work? Can they make a showing if they attempt it?" Today this topic is omitted from the program. The answer is taken for granted. Much water had to pass under the bridge, however, before the question ceased to be raised. For the most part those who are not yet convinced of the ability of women to do graduate work of high quality are a negligible minority. We may think of this particular question as settled, register progress, and turn to the questions now arising. The old sequence of doubts concerned our powers of learning. "Will girls retard the progress of their brothers if admitted alongside them to high school study," "Will they bring down undergraduate collegiate standards if admitted to colleges?" "Will they find their progress checked at last when they reach the graduate school?"

The questions that arise today are of a different character. Accepting the woman graduate student and her abilities as demonstrated facts, how, it is asked, shall she be attracted to educational

<sup>1</sup> Read at the meeting of the National Association of Deans of Women, Chicago, February 25, 1922.

institutions in larger numbers and higher quality? Is it wise to try to attract her? What shall be done with her when her study is completed?

I look forward to a time when it will be neither necessary nor profitable to speak separately of graduate study for men and women, to distinguish and to contrast. But while women in higher study remain somewhat new and experimental, consideration of their abilities, status, and opportunities must be treated as something apart.

## II

Many acquaintances with whom I have talked recently, both from the Atlantic coast and from the Central West, seem to feel depression rather than enthusiasm concerning the wisdom of stimulating women to enter graduate work. They have taken stock of conditions, and infer that there is hardly warrant for encouraging many promising women to equip themselves for higher educational positions, while the number of available positions is so meager. The National Bureau of Education reported sometime ago that the number of women holding positions in higher institutions of learning is actually decreasing. Twice in the *Journal of the Association of Collegiate Alumnae* the fact has been noted that, on the teaching faculties of many institutions, opportunities for women seem to be narrowing. One article instanced the rapid reduction, in recent years, of the number of women in higher teaching positions in a large Western university, giving statistics to support the generalization. Another writer, a member of the faculty of an Eastern women's institution, referred to the positions which "apparently are to some extent being quietly taken from the women of this generation in universities and larger colleges." In some institutions the crowding out of women of long and efficient service and the replacing of them by men is a fact too obvious to be overlooked. Even in women's colleges this tendency is noticeable, said one informant, and she instanced the multiplication of men teachers in the higher positions in several women's colleges. Another, an extreme pessimist, remarked, "Now that salaries are better, women are less and less likely to receive appointments to academic positions. That they broke in at all was because, when they were admitted, their positions offered much work and little pay, and men were not available."

It is perhaps profitable to dwell a little longer on current expressions of disappointment. Occasionally strong graduate students remark that they were encouraged to continue study, to work hard, to produce dissertations, to win degrees, only to find that there was nothing for them after their degrees were obtained. To quote from one such student, "The interest of our professors wanes, we are recommended for no advanced positions, and no advanced positions open for us." Or we are reminded of the frequency of the spectacle of a man of mediocre ability who leaves school to take some educational position at a high salary, while the able girl who was his superior when they worked side by side, may be employed to serve under him at a low salary. It is perhaps true that the scarcity of collegiate positions open to highly educated women, and the inferiority of most of these positions, make the wholesale attraction of able women into graduate work—when such study is thought of as an investment—unwise.

Hasty generalization is not safe, however, for much depends upon the subject of study. Higher study is better marketed in some subjects than in others. One can usually place the A.B. in home economics, or the skilled secretary, or the Y. W. C. A. worker, at once in higher salaried positions than one can the new Ph.D. in humanistic or scientific subjects, as history, English, mathematics, philosophy. Some idea of the present working of the law of supply and demand may be had from a glance at the pages of a recent number of the *Teachers College Bulletin* of Columbia University, which lists the positions recently filled by its alumni. The men graduates become superintendents, principals, directors, professors of education, of psychology, heads of science departments. The majority of the women are placed in positions where there is no question of competition with men. They become teachers of household arts, economics, dietetics, nutrition, textiles, clothing, cafeteria supervision, design, physical education. Some become supervisors of elementary work, and some deans of women. The rest take subordinate positions as instructors in English, in normal training, and the like. This looks as though it is wiser for the graduate student who wishes to market her work to take up some line in which there will be no competition with men.

A final informant of whom I made inquiry assured me that the number of good women candidates for higher degrees is lessening at many institutions. Her statement was based upon opinion rather

than upon investigation. It is perhaps true that the number has reduced itself, speaking relatively, in some subjects. Many ambitious women who might once have prosecuted graduate work for higher degrees have found openings that promise better returns. This may be but a passing tendency. As other opportunities lessen, with the recession of the war, the drift back to preparation for the teaching of humanistic subjects may gain. One wishes, however, for an increase in the agencies of stimulus; for example, for the institution of something for women corresponding to the Rhodes scholarships at Oxford for men. The Association of Collegiate Alumnae has done very well indeed in the offering of fellowships; but the number of able applicants points to the desirability of additional opportunities.

### III

Such are some of the comments currently made when the matter of stimulating graduate work for women is under consideration. What is to be thought of them? One can view these expressions of disappointment with philosophic calm, I think, as accompaniments of a stage in progress. A time of adjustment has always to be passed through. Those who are impatient at present conditions need only to place themselves back fifty years to realize the advance that has been made. The opportunities of today probably go beyond the wildest dreams of an earlier generation.

There is but one of the current comments concerning women and graduate study which I cannot hear with undisturbed equanimity. It is hard to assent resignedly to the statement from those in control of appointments that the reason few women are given academic appointments is that "no women of ability are to be had." "We have the positions," said one man, "and we are perfectly willing to employ women, but no strong ones are available." I have heard this remark from Eastern college administrators and from Western college administrators, and I never hear it with patience. Women are abundantly available for higher positions if anybody wants them. Just as they showed themselves to be able to do graduate work when given the chance, or to succeed as instructors in the secondary schools when given the chance, so are they able to succeed in academic positions; and enough of them are to be had. One has only to look about, or to assure ambitious graduates of

what may be their positions if they equip themselves, to find candidates to suit all needs.

Phi Beta Kappa statistics from institutions where the method of choosing members is an impersonal one speak unmistakably of feminine competence. By impersonal method I mean a method based upon the quality of work done, not one which takes into account the sex of the candidate. Some coeducational institutions elect an equal number of men and women, even though the lowest grade among the women elected might be as high as the highest among the men. I have been told that at Brown University a few women having averages in the nineties are allowed election each year. The minimum grade for the men is not published but it is said to be somewhat lower. Once more, then, trustworthy statistics concerning college honors testify to feminine ability in abundance. It takes but a few years, under favorable conditions, for a brilliant candidate to secure the doctor's degree. An institution needing women teachers can select a promising candidate of the type it wishes, assure her of a position which will make her equipping herself worth while, and engage her when she has finished her preparation.

If there is little disposition to choose and develop promising graduate students for academic positions, there is another source that may be drawn upon, namely, women in secondary school work. Here is able material in abundance. The number of women holding higher degrees who are in secondary school work is now large. Many of them would need no further study to fill academic instructorships. The institution which seriously wishes able women teachers on its staff need be at no loss to find them. If the right women are not already at hand they can be developed, as men instructors are often developed, either from newly graduated material, or from the teaching staffs of secondary schools. Perhaps the safest outlook at present for the woman who wishes to command a good salary after her work of preparation is finished is in secondary school work. There is demand for strong women here, and they are meeting fairer and fairer treatment over a wide territory. Certainly the average salary of skillful teachers in large high schools exceeds the average for women in academic positions.

The commercial side of graduate work for women has had much attention in the preceding pages. Perhaps this does not sound very idealistic; yet this standpoint is important. What brings returns,

what is in contemporary demand is what attracts the strongest minds. The able are ambitious, and they go where their ambitions find scope.

Another factor to be taken into account in encouraging graduate work is the capacity of the individual student. Some professors in the graduate school, anxious to swell the numbers of their classes, seem often to encourage those with second-rate minds to continue their study, at a cost of time and money not justified by their abilities. Individual capacity should be borne in mind when a teacher encourages graduate study as well as the available positions which will open up.

When one is asked whether it pays women students or teachers to try to do much research work, one hesitates to make an unqualified response. With a man such questions rarely arise. His advancement is supposed to turn on his interest and industry and on the products of his research. His research work may well take on more importance for him than his immediate educational tasks. He has no idea of settling down in an instructorship, while a woman usually feels herself to be rather fortunate to find herself in collegiate work at all. For the man rather than for his feminine associates promotion, higher salary, competition with his fellows, offers of positions elsewhere, turn on the name he can secure by publication. Very often the best the woman instructor can do is to attend with all her might to the pedagogical details that are set before her, and take for granted that outside effort would not pay. If she prints some good piece of work, it hardly makes enough difference in her status to make her efforts worth while. She must be willing to do the work purely for the work's sake, and not with the expectation that it will count to her advantage, as it might for a man.

The relative instability in professional life of women educators has often been brought up as an explanation of their slowness to be awarded desirable positions. Yet this relative instability has been shown many times to be legend, not fact. Educational work is often deserted for some other career by men and women both. As long ago as the days of T. W. Higginson, statistics were gathered which demonstrated that, despite the popular belief, women were as stable in teaching positions as were men. Those who look up figures on the subject will find that it is equally true at present that no greater percentage of women than of men—often not so great a percentage—gives up the teaching profession for some other.

## IV

If this citation of views, this account of the present situation, has sounded discouraging at times, this is not the impression I wish to leave of my personal feeling. It is anything but a feeling of depression. Surely when one surveys the field and remembers how advance is conditioned by time, the outlook seems as auspicious as may fairly be expected. If there is a slight set-back now, it is not likely to last. The percentage of women on the faculties of coeducational institutions can hardly continue to be so small. There is too great need of them, nor are men always available in these days for beginning positions. The principle is winning recognition that women teachers are needed in fair proportion to the number of women students, just as men teachers are needed in fair proportion to the boys in attendance at high schools. Some of the state universities which seem slow to recognize the need of an adequate percentage of women instructors are, I believe, California and Michigan. Cornell is another coeducational institution which is said to be backward in this respect.

An article in a recent bulletin of the American Association of University Professors opens up a possibility for the woman scholar which I confess I had not before contemplated; namely, the appointment of women on the faculties of men's institutions, as men are now appointed on the faculties of women's institutions. Here are a few sentences from the report of the committee, of which Dr. A. Caswell Ellis is the chairman:

While no professorship of the first class in colleges for men only has been filled by a woman, 131 such professorships, or 45 per cent of the total, in colleges for women only have been filled by men. . . . With apparently only two exceptions, both of very recent date, it has never occurred to the authorities of colleges for men that women could teach successfully in a college for men. . . . If it has proved true, as seems to be universally admitted, that a certain number of men in the faculty of a college for women gives a better balanced and more stimulating leadership to the student, it may well be asked seriously whether our colleges for men are not blindly following a medieval tradition in excluding women from their faculties.

If the possibility of such appointments is raised in the 1920's, our successors of some generations hence may awake to find the possibility realized!

Meanwhile, in the struggle for the recognition of women as college teachers, much will turn on scholarship, the scholarship of

the graduate school, and on the numbers in which women attend. Anyone who has had much to do with them knows that women students do not shun hard work but take to it, that they make good records, that they are faithful to the tasks prescribed to them. Moreover, at present, despite the slump to the commercial, trained women scholars are available in numbers unknown a few decades ago. The time when one could count the number of women Ph.D.'s in America on the fingers of a hand has passed. Time and time again, given any chance at all, women have vanquished the obstacles in their path by sheer persistence and by demonstration of their native abilities. And time and time again, men—the larger-minded ones—have shown that when they get around to it, when they understand, they are glad to stretch out a helping hand. Often the stronger the man, the readier his assistance. Surely in a few generations a fair proportion of women scholars will have won their way into higher positions as teachers and investigators.

Finally, may be noted the number of helpful agencies now watchful and active as aids to women's education. The Association of Collegiate Alumnae, established to keep a guardian eye on the collegiate education of women, while it was yet under probation as it were, is continuing its activities under a new name. It will still be at hand, when need for its vigilance arises. There are still in positions of influence many far-sighted women. Among them Miss Thomas, so long associated with Bryn Mawr, has been a salient figure. She can look back over many changes, from the time when she was a pioneer woman candidate for the doctor's degree at the University of Zürich. She has championed many causes while they were yet young and has seen them develop and conquer opposition. She has never shirked important problems but has kept place in the van of progress. Another salient figure is Miss Gildersleeve, of Barnard, whose leadership in projects for the special encouragement of gifted students has been a recent newspaper topic, and who is now deeply interested in the International Association of University Women. The larger rôle played by intelligence tests in the selection of human material deserving encouragement and assistance in educational training is another promising feature of the times. There need be no fear that when subjected to these tests the woman student will fall down. And last, we need not be reminded of the existence of organizations like that gathered here this morning, which though comparatively new, has affiliations



over the whole country and in many different types of institutions, and hence cannot but have a salutary influence on the promotion of women's scholarship in the future.

All in all, taking these various considerations into account, one feels confident that graduate work for women will enter upon a larger and larger field, that it will grow in importance for the educational world, that it will soon bring more immediate returns, and that it deserves stimulation. I look forward to a time when it will be neither necessary nor profitable to speak separately of graduate work for men and for women.

*1921*

## WHAT SHOULD BE EXPECTED OF THE TEACHER OF ENGLISH?

### I

It must be somewhat dismaying for the impressionable secondary-school teacher of English to hear at pedagogical gatherings and to read in pedagogical journals what is expected of her, beyond the teaching of her subject, by many school administrative authorities and by society in general. She is told that the tastes in reading of her pupils during their school years and consequently the reading and speech habits of their lifetimes—and not only this but the destinies of her pupils as citizens— are wholly in her hands. These are pretty sweeping responsibilities. It might indeed be inferred from the exhortations of the “talent” at association meetings, often, too, from laymen’s letters to newspapers and from editorials, that the teaching of her special subject, its essential content, landmarks, criteria, laws, is the least important task of the teacher of English instead of her primary task. She has her own particular niche to fill in the educational scheme, like the teachers of other subjects. Yet it could have but little of her attention were she to strive to carry out *in toto* the large ambitions which are urged upon her. The aims set before her by some of her mentors’ at association meetings are often less germane to her particular subject than they are to other subjects. Frequently they are the ideals belonging to the school life of the pupils and to the secondary-school system

as a whole, rather than the ideals which should predominate in the classrooms of some one subject. The English teacher is urged to devote her main efforts to accomplishing ends which the school as a whole and the teaching force as a whole, strive as they will, cannot wholly accomplish. Assuredly she deserves a modicum of compassion as she sits at the feet of professional speakers, hears their reproaches, and realizes the extent to which the failings of contemporary society are brought to her door.

## II. THE TEACHER AND "OUTSIDE READING"

What, indeed, are the matters fairly belonging to the English teacher's special subject of study? The teacher may justly be held to account for the conduct of study in the classroom, and she should be ambitious to influence the reading to which the pupil finds his way outside the classroom. But she should not be given the responsibility for the latter, and its character is no test of the success or failure of her courses. What is read outside the classroom is reading for recreation. The teacher may have ambitions concerning it, but she is not accountable for it. Many assume that she is accountable. I recall a middle western superintendent, a man of more than ordinary ability, who took a referendum as to the outside reading of the high-school pupils of his region and seemed deeply impressed and somewhat aghast to learn that the boys and girls read habitually the works of George Barr McCutcheon, Harold Bell Wright, and Gene Stratton Porter, while "none of them read Shakespeare or Milton or other classics" out of hours. And he seemed to argue therefrom with considerable effectiveness that because the pupils read for their recreation works of minor contemporary fiction rather than the "classics," reading of the type which they like should be made the subject of their study, rather than Shakespeare and Milton, since these "do not interest them." Indeed, some of the literature recommended for the English courses, to the exclusion of masterpieces of permanent interest, is surprising because of its impermanence. I have heard able speakers recommend Harold Bell Wright for classroom study, instead of certain nineteenth-century British and American poets. "Boys do not like poetry." The school years are those when the memory is most tenacious, when what is learned and its influence abide through life, if anything does. Minor fiction and fugitive pieces in con-

temporary light periodicals have their value; they may be used incidentally in the classroom, for illustration or for collateral reading, and they should be so used. Yet they are not significant enough to be worth remembering for a lifetime. Why use them to displace something which the world will still cherish and find significant long after the present generation has passed?

The teacher herself hardly reads Shakespeare outside the classroom for recreation, when she is concerned with him professionally within the classroom. She seeks change. I recall one very popular college teacher whose favorite recreative reading was Florence Barclay. Should we expect of the pupils what we do not expect of the teacher? I recall also a professor, a profound scholar and the author of works of much importance for human society, who read for recreation, avidly and omnivorously, detective stories, love stories, best sellers, anything light that came his way. Why not? He dealt with solid enough things within hours, and he deserved the privilege out of hours of reading what he would. Why should it surprise and grieve the collegiate teacher of English if her pupils choose for recreative reading the *Saturday Evening Post* instead of the *Atlantic Monthly*, or if they prefer Ella Wheeler Wilcox to Mascefield's sonnets? It might be that, but for their training in school, the reading of our pupils would be confined to the *Police Gazette*, if this periodical still circulates, or to yellow newspapers, or, more likely still, to nothing at all. The student of "American ideals" can certainly find them in the *Saturday Evening Post* as well as in the *Atlantic*. If their classroom time is devoted to difficult things on which they need help and which they will never know if not from the classroom, young people ought to be allowed relaxation when outside the classroom; and it is the exceptional young person who would find this in "uplift" essays and "classical" poetry. They seek diversion in reading matter as naturally as they seek it in vaudeville programs or in sports. The teacher can do her best to impart sound tastes and right social ideals through the classroom; but her conscience should not burden itself nor should her course be "junked" if, after she has done her best in school hours, the literary preoccupations of her pupils out of hours fall short of the severest ideals of her critics. There are limits to what she can accomplish, and there are limits to her responsibility.

## III. THE PUPILS AND THE "CLASSICS"

We are often told that it is the duty of the teacher of English to bring her pupils to "love" the classics. That she fails to do this, much or more of the time, is often made a subject of complaint. The teacher may not herself love all the classics that she teaches. She may care for Shelley's poems and not for Wordsworth's; she may care for Spenser's and not for Milton's; for Browning's and not for Tennyson's; or she and her pupils, like many teachers and pupils, may care for prose while they do not in their hearts care for verse. But it is assumed that a first duty of the teacher is to impart this love, and to do it unintermittently, as it were, and *en bloc*. When she has not imparted it she has failed. Many—the type is familiar—hold that because of such failure to universalize devotion to masterpieces among the pupils no attempt should be made to teach masterpieces in the secondary schools at all. They are convinced that some contemporary bit of patriotic or sentimental verse, readable now though the world will have forgotten it in a few years, is better worthy of study in the classroom period than are "outworn" pieces like Gray's *Elegy* or the plays of Shakespeare. Again and again one hears speakers who seem to leave the impression with their audiences that the teacher should attempt to teach her pupils not what belongs to, or has primary significance for, her subject, but what the as yet undeveloped tastes of her pupils may happen to prefer. Not the accepted standards, or the larger outlook for her subject, should determine the choice of material for classroom study but the preferences of those who are beginning the subject. How easy it is to predict that, in the latter case, the material selected will be that making least demands on pupil and teacher and in the long run affording a minimum of intellectual discipline.

The assumption underlying criticism of this character is of doubtful validity. The teacher of literature should not feel that it is obligatory upon her to impart love of the classics, especially of all the classics, to her pupils. Rather is hers the less ambitious duty to make her pupils know and understand the works which they study. This is not a utopian ideal. It is one which she can carry out. The "love" which is imparted is the personal affair of the pupils and must be left to take care of itself. It cannot be forced. No matter what the spell-binding powers of the teacher may be, not all the members of the same class will like the same things, nor should all be expected to like the things which the

teacher likes. In well-planned courses there should be variety enough for all. And no member of the class should be expected to like *all* the pieces studied. Possibly he may like none of them, and yet the study of them may be salutary for him. But he can be made familiar with them, and he can be made to understand them. That of itself widens his horizon and enriches his intellectual life. There is analogy here with history. The fairly advanced student of history may come to love King Alfred, or Lincoln, or Roosevelt; but whether he find them admirable or lovable or not, he must come to know also Machiavelli and Napoleon and Bismarck. The attitude of a class toward these latter men, or toward the first-named, for that matter, is no gauge of the success or failure of the work of a teacher of history. The fairly advanced student of literature should know and understand the work of Swift, or Carlyle, or Walt Whitman; but whether the writings of these men are material for his affectionate predilections is another affair. The sentiments of students—their sentiments in advance toward the authors whom they study—afford no proper criterion of the value of their study in relation to the subject as a whole or of its utility for themselves. The attempt should be made to help them know what they ought to know, so far as may be, and to insure that they understand it, so far as may be; but it should not be felt that their devotion and their enthusiasm can be had to order.

#### IV. THE TEACHER AND "CITIZENSHIP"

Among the many ambitious things expected of the teacher of English the most ambitious is that she should be held to chief accountability for the teaching of "citizenship." The civic education of her pupils is not primarily her affair, though it may be secondarily her affair. Those teachers who are overzealous in this regard—and there are such—are usually those who fail most markedly in imparting knowledge of their ostensible subject. The time taken for one set of things is taken at the expense of another set of things. The more of the class period pre-empted for the discussion of outside topics, the less remains for topics which need all the time available for them. Usually the teachers who most emphasize the extraneous and collateral, rather than their specific subjects, are those who are themselves weakest and most uninterested in their subjects, and who leave their pupils weakest and most uninterested.

The following passage is from an article in a recent number of a pedagogical journal. The article is a good one, and chiefly it points out how teachers should select and utilize the material for English study with a view to influencing future society. Nevertheless the passage suggests the tendency to map out for the English teacher more than may fairly be expected of her; and to induce her to subordinate her subject proper to endeavors too large for her legitimate field.

If teachers of English were to make a survey of the needs of the American people and were then to make a list and a classification of the ideals which, if made in common, would best meet these dominant needs, we should have a very good guide for the selection of literature. . . . Among these ideals which . . . must be made the driving forces of all Americans we find respect for property rights, chastity, monogamy, parental love, respect for age and womanhood, sympathy with suffering and affliction, self-sacrifice and self-denial, personal integrity, loyalty, friendship, cleanliness and personal purity, altruism, achievement, truthloving, simplicity, work, health, initiative, independence, patriotism, national unity, local self-government, right use of property, ennobled ideals of sexual love, ambition of right types, peace and good will, unprejudiced observation and inductive thinking, scientific method, efficiency and expertness, respect for authority and human brotherhood. . . . Parents send their children to school to be lifted up and inspired by such ideals. We English teachers can get from such a list a sense of relative values in our work that the old-time teacher . . . never attained.

The teacher who set about to teach this list of virtues, subordinating her year's work in English, would be lost. Need it be reiterated that preparation for citizenship is the aim of all secondary-school work? It is especially to be kept in mind in influencing the extra-classroom activities of the pupils, which are now recognized as so important in the life of the schools. To prepare its pupils for citizenship is incontestably one of the two chief aims of the school. By means of school programs and school organization, the young people of America must be reached, to elevate American ideals and to improve American social and political conditions. This ideal for the schools must penetrate the classrooms, too, if the modern educational program is to be carried through. But the teaching of citizenship is a collateral, not a chief, aim of the English class. The latter has to do with the use of language, written or oral, and with the content and modes and types of literature. The "citizenship" ideal should find its place most of all in classrooms in history and civics. In the pedagogical scheme, each subject required for the building of the total character has its niche, and the chief duty

of the teacher of any subject is to teach that subject to the best of her ability. She must make it as interesting and valuable as she can; but unless she devotes herself mainly to her subject, she is slacking in her contribution to the whole.

Let each teacher feel responsibility for the total structure, to the neglect of her own stones in its foundation, and the structure is likely to collapse. The teachers of English, and of history, mathematics, language, science, can link their work with the present by illustration from contemporary happenings, or can indicate moral lessons when the latter may fairly be drawn from the day's assignment; and can emphasize incidental topics by references to local or national conditions. Every good teacher strives to do this. But it is her primary business to teach her subject. She should not usurp to herself the ideal of the general system of education and of all society.

## V

Doubtless there is exaggeration in some of the preceding remarks. There is exaggeration enough assuredly in the generalizations of the critics of the teacher of English; exaggeration in response ought to be legitimate. But I know of nothing likely to bring more irresponsibility in teaching, more neglect of fundamentals, more that will promote surface knowledge and substitute facile discussion for real acquisition, than too great neglect of the specific for the hortatory. In many classrooms the tendency is already pronounced to let outside things have priority over solid acquirement of the real subject. I recall a speaker addressing a group of English teachers, who made reference to a recent revelation of political corruption on a large scale in a mid-western city—and then seemed to place the responsibility for it on the teachers of English in the city schools. What, he asked, was taught in the English classes in that city? Did the citizens inquire, and did they seek at once for reorganization here? Did they understand where the fault lay? That the corrupt politicians were educated in another generation, in other towns, by other teachers, had no weight with him. He pointed his finger at the group he was addressing and drove home to each the guilt of her sisters and of herself.

The building of character, the development of a responsible body of citizens to watch its affairs, are important things for a democracy. They are vastly important. But these have at the present



time their share of attention from school administrators. They are bound up with the school system as a whole. Though they may have been neglected in the past they will not be neglected in the future. And the school system has another object, the preservation, handing on, and increase of human learning. The responsibility for this does rest primarily on the teacher. This too is vastly important for civilization, for without it there is retrogression. The schools must train and encourage those who are to preserve, increase, and diffuse human knowledge; realization of this function of education must not be allowed to wane. Solid acquisition in various branches of learning may not be dispensed with or neglected, or disparaged. The badgered teacher of English should teach her subject as conscientiously as she can, always with a view to its place in the larger educational scheme; but she should not despair if she must hand over a large share of the salvation of society to her superiors and to her colleagues.

1920

## THE COLLEGE WOMAN AND RESEARCH<sup>1</sup>

Much is made of "research," in these days, in the academic world. Engaging in it is supposed to bring prestige to its prosecutors. The comment is sometimes heard that many qualities once demanded of members of university faculties now seem unimportant beside the ability to do original work. Those who do not engage in research are likely to defer tacitly to those who do. Most of us recall people who utter the term in collegiate life as though spelled with an initial capital, if not as written wholly in capital letters. The advanced positions upon university faculties are likely to go to the investigators in the various departments of learning. Next to the administrators, it is the investigators and the "professors who publish"—the two are usually identical—whose promotion is supposed to be most rapid. This may overstate the matter a little for some institutions and be quite untrue for a number more; but it holds, I think, in the main.

When divested of some of its factitious glamour, this deference to the investigator is not unwarranted. If it is the mission of a university to preserve the learning of the world, upon which its civilization must rest, it is also its mission to seek to add to that learning and to train and to encourage those who are to add to it in the next generation, whether or not they are to do so because associated with some institution of learning. The investigators are those among the instructional staff who try to put to a direct use, other

<sup>1</sup> Read at a meeting of the American Association of Collegiate Alumnae, 1920.

than pedagogical, their accumulated fund of knowledge, who detect unsolved problems, who think out new points of view or new methods of approach. The scholar who succeeds in this, especially the scholar who inspires and directs others, must have a wide view, a command of his whole field, if his results are to be valid. He has special qualifications, or must develop them. He cannot remain in a groove, submitting to routine, teaching the same things in the same way, never growing or changing. He must be alert, ask questions, and seek to find their answer. He is not often the member of the academic force who stagnates but is not infrequently the one who is most stimulating.

One may smile at the popular awe of the professor who engages in research and prefer the word when spelled mentally with a small letter. Yet research is one of the chief things which an institution of higher learning exists to promote, and the larger share of the prestige of the academic investigator is deserved.

Is research for college women as well as for college men? Should they continue to try their hands at it, or should they let it alone as not for them? Most members of the Association of Collegiate Alumnae remember the time, not very far in the past, when college women were told by the friendly and distinguished head of a coeducational institution that however successful they might be as undergraduates, as graduate students they could not expect to hold their own. They might show excellent results till they reached the graduate school; but there they must expect to lag behind. Nature so built them. There are many who hold this view at the present time; and they are not only men—whose experiences have not been such as to give them first-hand knowledge of the comparative abilities of women and who hence, naturally enough, repeat the traditional view—but they are women as well, who also have had no opportunities to judge of the comparative powers of their sex. The customary explanation when women graduate students do brilliant work, better work sometimes than their men associates, is that they must be "selected women," the "few best," while their masculine co-workers are not a selected class, choosing their line of work because of a special bent for it, but are in the work by chance. When the man does well, it is taken for granted that he is typical. When a woman does well (so strong is tradition), it is still thought to need explanation; and it is taken for granted that she is not typical but the product of special circumstances.

Surely in these days we may add to the list of "pleasant possibles for lady professors" of which the *Journal of the Association of Collegiate Alumnae* speaks, the "possible" that the college woman will ultimately take her recognized place as an investigator alongside her men colleagues. As a graduate student the college woman has already demonstrated that she is able in ample numbers to engage successfully in original work in many lines, economic, aesthetic, linguistic, literary, scientific. If the "lady professor" increases in numbers, she will not show herself lacking in the powers which she exhibited as a graduate student. Wherever she is present in equal numbers with equal preparation and equal stimulus, she holds her own with her men associates in the graduate school and she has sometimes been known to forge beyond them. After the graduate school, her status usually suggests the amateur rather than the professional. She stands at one side longingly, tries her hand a little—in a gingerly way—but is not yet the confident professional. Nor is it difficult to detect the two things which restrict her to this position.

For one thing, there are not many "lady professors" in advanced positions, or indeed in positions which are favorable for the prosecution of original work. It is not always realized this it is usually those occupying strategic positions to whom fall the opportunities and the stimulus and the leisure for original work. It is not those who give elementary college instruction but those who have advanced courses to whom their everyday work suggests unsolved problems, for whom it necessitates minute knowledge, full bibliographical equipment, fertility in supplying subjects for investigation for candidates for higher degrees. What is demanded of the professor in an advanced position he exerts himself to supply. Until there are women in fair numbers in advanced positions, both the opportunity and the stimulus will be missing for them to show what they are able to do themselves, or what they may be able to inspire others to do. It is the rare spirit, whether man or woman, who can conquer unfavorable conditions and produce in equal degree with those whom circumstances favor.

For another thing, more self-confidence is needed by women themselves. This is being gained rapidly, but there is yet a considerable way to go. The tradition is that women shall distrust their abilities, shall lean on others, shall assume that they cannot rather than that they can. The teacher who teaches men and

women both is often surprised to learn that the women have usually no idea how relatively able they are. The undergraduate girl who leads the class usually takes for granted that her abilities are inferior to those of most of her men classmates. The graduate woman who writes a fine paper is certain that most of her men associates write better. She does not realize, speaking comparatively, the quality of the work which she is really able to do. She hesitates to try, where her brother would strike boldly ahead even though he may be endowed with less ability or be less well equipped.

Women are fast learning to trust in their own powers, to believe that they can rather than that they cannot, but the woman teacher or woman student lags somewhat behind the clubwoman in this respect, or behind the new "political" woman, possibly behind the business woman. Such, at least, is my present impression. It is the woman investigator in industries, especially she who investigates problems connected with her own sex, or with children, who has carried her investigations farthest, and she outranks at present her sisters who have worked in other lines. The woman investigator of social and industrial problems is better known than the woman scientist and linguist and historian, though she may not be a member of a college staff while the others probably are. It is she however for whom opportunities are most favorable and the returns most immediate. And the success which she has gained for herself shows the success which the others may achieve.

The college woman needs two things, first, stimulating opportunity, and, second, confidence in herself, to demonstrate that she can contribute her fair share in still another line which tradition has said is not for her.

Since things are as they are, may it not be that the encouragement which the professor in the graduate school should give to ambitious women students to prosecute advanced work and devote many months of their time to the preparation of a dissertation, should vary with the subject of study and with the circumstances of the student. The comment is heard that many bright women find themselves encouraged by the faculty, work hard, win their degrees, but do so only to find that there is nothing for them after their degrees have been attained. "The interest of our professors wanes, we are recommended for no advanced positions, and no advanced positions open for us." In English especially, or in history or in linguistics, possibly not in the sciences or in economics, this

criticism is often valid. Few enough positions open in these subjects for either men or women holders of doctoral degrees. In my own subject, English, it seems to me that the conscientious professor should make sure that if, because of his encouragement or influenced by his urging, a woman student works under him for a higher degree, she should do so out of pure love for the subject or for the research itself—not because she expects to attain a higher position or some immediate reward; or else she should be a student placed in such circumstances that her continuance of her study will not come at great financial sacrifice.

Last, let us glance for a moment at a possibility. Before the outbreak of the war, the opinion was sometimes heard that culture and the furtherance of cultural subjects were “falling to the monopoly of women.” Commercial and industrial interests claim more and more the time and activities of men, and various provinces of learning once wholly in their hands are being bequeathed to us. If such a trend was noticeable before the war, what may be expected in the decades after the war? Upon whom will fall the responsibility for carrying on the torch in the more humanistic branches of collegiate learning if not upon us? As our institutions of learning place more and more emphasis upon the vocational and the economic, it seems well within the possibilities that investigation in humanistic or cultural subjects, if it is to be carried on at all, may fall in the future to college women. This possibility is remote perhaps, and perhaps unlikely, but it remains a possibility.

1920

## MISCELLANEOUS

### ON THE PRONUNCIATION OF "EITHER" AND "NEITHER"

Since *American Speech*, now in its seventh volume, was established, many contributors have suggested to me, in private letters or in contributions submitted for print, that the pronunciations *eyether* and *nyether*, alongside the older *eether* and *neether* and the Irish *ayther* and *nayther*, were "introduced by British royalty," i.e., by the Georges, who were Hanoverians and pronounced English in the German fashion. The last article reaching me that suggested this origin had:

Whereas we in America pronounce *either* and *neither* as if the first syllable were spelled with long *e*'s as did the London literati in 1777 (see William Perry's *Royal Standard English Dictionary* of that date), the English at the present day say *eyether* and *nyether*. Is it not possible that in changing the pronunciation of these words they were simply following the German usage in pronouncing *ei*? The early Georges were very German.

A professor of my student days sometimes informed his hearers to the same effect: "The German Georges brought in the pronunciations *eyether* and *nyether*." I recall that I felt skeptical even then, for it seemed to me improbable that among all the words spelled with *ei*, as *seize*, *weird*, *receive*, *perceive*, etc., or the group like *their*, *eight*, *feign*, *reign*, *royalty* and its imitators would select

the unimportant connectives *either* and *neither* to mispronounce and to hand on to future generations.

What is the source of the stock explanation that places responsibility at the door of the house of Hanover? Whence its persistent vitality? The contributors suggesting it have never cited their "authority." They seem to arrive at their hypothesis individually and independently.

The oldest American statement of the German-pronunciation view I have found is that of James Fenimore Cooper (1789–1851) in his essay "The American Democrat, or Hints on the social and civil relations of the United States of America."<sup>1</sup> Cooper is hardly a trustworthy philologist.

The polite pronunciation of "either" and "neither," is "i-ther" and "ni-ther," and not "cether" and "neether." This is a case in which the better usage of the language has respected derivations, for "ei" in German are pronounced as in "height" and "sleight," "ie" making the sound of "ee." We see the arbitrary usages of the English, however, by comparing these legitimate sounds with those of the words "lieutenant-colonel," which are derived from the French, in which language the latter word is called "co-lo-nel."

As late as 1883, the same explanation appears—this time referring specifically to Kings George I and George II—in so learned a journal as *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen*, (vol. 37, page 125). The contributor signs himself Ad. Ey—in English this name would be, ominously, A Egg. He quotes the American lexicographer Webster to the effect that the pronunciation with *ee* still prevails in the United States, while the other "has of late become somewhat common in England." Herr Ey comments that higher circles seeking careful speech prefer *eyether*, and that apparently it ranks as more aristocratic. He adds:

The unnatural pronunciation *ither* and *nither* is to be traced back to George I's ignorance of the English language. Macaulay says of George I and George II: "If they spoke our language they spoke it inelegantly and with effort." That George I handled the English language, which he learned late, clumsily (because of which he had no interest in English literature), is well known. He pronounced the words *either* and *neither* in the German fashion, which the courtiers, not to correct the King, took over and put into currency.

The *eyether* pronunciation undoubtedly made great headway in the nineteenth century, although the *Oxford Dictionary*, in its

<sup>1</sup> Cooperstown, 1838. Pages 117–124. Reprinted in M. M. Mathews' *The Beginnings of American English*, 1931, p. 125.



volume of 1907, still gives it second place, remarking that, though it is not in accordance with the analogues of Standard English, it is in London somewhat more prevalent in educated speech than is *eether*. Fowler's *Modern English Usage*, 1926, unhesitatingly predicts the establishment of *eyether*. Daniel Jones, *English Pronouncing Dictionary*, 1927 edition, gives *eyether* first place. By this time, then, the diphthongal pronunciation (with *i* as in *ride*, phonetic *ai*) has won unmistakable dominance across the Atlantic.

Some support seems to be given, at first glance, to the House of Hanover theory by the fact that *eyether* first gets philological recognition and support in the eighteenth century. James Buchanan in 1776, *Essay toward establishing a standard for an elegant and uniform pronunciation of the English language*, gives *eyether* without recognition of *eether*. John Walker, in his *A Critical Pronouncing Dictionary*, 1791, enters both pronunciations as very common but gives first place to *eether* as more consistent with analogy and as the pronunciation of David Garrick. Benjamin H. Smart in 1849, *Walker Remodelled, Smart's Pronouncing Dictionary of the English Language*, gives *eether* without recognizing *eyether*.

Crossing to America, the inquirer finds in Noah Webster's *Dissertations on the English Language*, 1789: "The words *either*, *neither* . . . are generally pronounced by the eastern people *ither*, *nither* . . . These are errors; all the standard authors agree to give *ei* in these words the sound of *ee*. This is the practice in England in the middle and southern states." Webster's stand remained that of later American authorities throughout the century. The distinguished philologist, W. D. Whitney (1827-1894) was a firm opponent of the London pronunciation.

"The pronunciation of *either* and *neither* seems at the present time to be spreading in our community, and threatening to crowd out the better-supported and more analogical *ēither* and *nēither*; but it is only by the deliberate choice of persons who fancy that there is something more *recherché*, more 'English,' in the new sound, and by imitation of these on the part of others."<sup>2</sup>

"These last two [*height* and *sleight*] are the only English words in which the *ei* has had the diphthongal sound: which, however, is beginning to be extensively heard in *either* and *neither*. Whatever actual foundation the last may have in the native usage of any part of the English-speaking people, it has spread in recent times far beyond that foundation, by a kind of reasonless and senseless infection, which can only be condemned and ought to be stoutly

<sup>2</sup> *Language and the Study of Language*, 1867, p. 43.

opposed and put down. I have no quarrel with those to whom *aither* and *naither* are a genuine part of their English dialect, who heard the pronunciation in their childhood and grew up to use it unconsciously; but that vastly larger class who originally said *eether* and *neether*, and have since gone about deliberately to change it, ought to realize with shame the folly of which they have been guilty, and reform."<sup>8</sup>

American philologists still align themselves, in the main, with Whitney. G. P. Krapp, *The Pronunciation of Standard English in America*, 1919 (§164) remarks that the general pronunciation is *eether* and *neether*, but occasionally *eyether* and *nyether* are heard, "often as a conscious refined pronunciation." He notes in his *A Comprehensive Guide to Good English*, 1927, that the diphthongal pronunciation is more general in England than in America. The 1931 *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* and the *Standard Dictionary* give first place to *eether* and *neether*.

On the whole, however, the diphthongal pronunciation has made noticeable progress in this country since Whitney's characterization of it as a "senseless infection." Backed by stage usage, which inclines toward British precept and example, and by pulpit usage, which inclines in the same direction, the idea gains currency that the diphthongal pronunciation is the more "elegant"; this despite the fact that it is really the radical not the conservative pronunciation. It seems pretty safe to predict its ultimate enthronement, once the masses get the idea that it is the more aristocratic. A pertinent passage, eloquent of its status, may be cited from an article on "The Lady Buyer," by Frances Anne Allen, printed in the *American Mercury* for February, 1928 (page 138).

"However, she possesses one vastly important earmark of the American lady . . . an earmark that no one can overlook. She may say 'Eye-talian' even after having been sent abroad for her firm, she may write 'formally' for formerly, and 'shamme' for chamois, and may unshamedly flaunt a dozen grammatical errors, but always, standing her in good stead, and ready at the tip of her tongue is her crystal-clear, British pronunciation of 'either.' She says the staunch word with such hauteur as to make one forget other mistakes and even feel apologetic for having noticed them. Nothing on earth could make her whisper *eether* in the darkest corner of a stock-room. She knows it would ruin her socially."

A potent recent factor in enhancing the prestige of *eyether* is its favor with the stars of the sound films. The socially prominent

<sup>8</sup> "The Elements of English Pronunciation," p. 221. Chapter VIII of *Oriental and Linguistic Studies*, 1874.

characters are made, almost without exception, to prefer the British pronunciation. Along with their broad *a*'s and dropped *r*'s and diphthongized *o*'s, they come out strongly for *eyether* and *nyether*, as they do for *bean* for *been*. With the example of the Tallulah Bankheads and Ruth Chattertons and Clive Brookses before them, who can doubt the direction in which the masses will tip the scales?

So much for the present and the future status of *either* and *neither*. It remains to consider the origin of the diphthongal pronunciation. It is uncertain. The word-lists of Alexander Ellis, *Early English Pronunciation* (1869–1889) are the best sources readily available to the inquirer. One thing that they make clear at once is that the diphthongal pronunciation came too early to be traced to the German Georges. John Jones enters it in his *Practical Phonography* of 1701, and George I did not come to the throne till 1714. Jones enters it as a secondary pronunciation, and it is seventeenth-century pronunciation that his book records. Doubtless the forerunners of Jones's *eyether* and *nyether* are to be found in the sixteenth century, possibly in Sir Thomas Smith's *De recta et emendata linguae anglicae scriptione*, etc., as Luick thinks, though I cannot verify his suggestion in Ellis's displays. Earlier than Jones, available testimony is meager and indecisive. In general the literature of *either* and *neither* is scanty. Many questions concerning the pronunciation of individual words, such as why we say *father* instead of rhyming the word with *rather* or else saying *feither*,<sup>4</sup> have had careful consideration; but *either* and *neither* have had no full-length attention. H. C. Wyld, for instance, seems to be silent on the subject, both in his *A Short History of English*, (revised edition 1927) and in his *A History of Modern Colloquial English* (1920).

The fullest treatment accorded the two connectives is given by Luick, *Untersuchungen zur englischen Lautgeschichte* (1896). From the Old English (Old Mercian *egðer*, West Saxon *æghwæðer*, *æðer*, with long initial vowels) come, among other Middle English forms (including lineal ancestors of the Irish *ayther* and *nayther*) an *ether* with a long open *e*, and a *by-form* with close *e*. Both would give our present *eether* by the eighteenth century, the first through a mid-stage agreeing with the Irish forms. Luick prefers to derive *eether* directly from the Middle English *ether* with close *e*. As for

<sup>4</sup> K. Malone, *Modern Philology*, XVI, 11–22. 1918.

*eyether* and *nyether*, he finds, he thinks, Scottish dialect forms that could give the Middle English long *i* (of *machine*), the vowel that should be the progenitor of the sixteenth-century diphthongal forms whence present *eyether*. He says nothing of the possible influence of James I (1603–1625) in setting a court fashion for the now preferred British pronunciation, though a better chronological case might be made for Scottish King James than for German King George.

Jespersen, on the other hand, is skeptical of Luick's explanation. In a brief note (*A Modern English Grammar*, I, §3.123. 1909), he takes the view, rejected by Luick, that the development of the Old English forms is parallel to that of the Old English long diphthongs of *eage* and *heah*, passing into the long monophthongs *ege*, *heh*, becoming Middle English *yge*, *hih*. Such development is not to be documented for *either* from Middle English—perhaps the new Middle English dictionary now in preparation, or the projected dictionary of Old Scotch, may throw light on the subject—but the assumption need not, because of this, be rejected. Scotch influence on London pronunciation has never been marked; and there is no clear evidence, in displays of present-day English dialects, that Scotch especially favored or favors the diphthongal pronunciation. Rather does the evidence point to the contrary. *Neither* had a somewhat different start, but ultimately followed *either* in its changes.

On the whole, it looks, then, as though the Old English forms giving Middle English *ether* etc., went the way also (through the influence of the Old English palatal *g*) of the Old English *heah*, *eage*, ancestors of *high* and *eye*, into a Middle English form with long *i*, the vowel of *machine*, which was the normal source of the diphthong of the sixteenth century. This diphthongal variant made its way into recognized standing in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In the nineteenth century it achieved priority in England, and made progress across the Atlantic. In the twentieth century it will probably get itself adopted in America. It is hardly necessary to add that, in view of the antecedent history of the forms, an explanation deriving the diphthongal pronunciation from the influence of the first and second King Georges is out of the question.

The many dialect pronunciations of *either* at the present time in

England are recorded in Joseph Wright's *English Dialect Grammar*.<sup>5</sup> Sometime in the future, when a careful linguistic map of the United States has been made, a corresponding list of the dialect variants of *either* in the United States may be available.<sup>6</sup>

1931

<sup>5</sup> 1905. P. 421.

<sup>6</sup> Read before the Present Day English section of the Modern Language Association of America, December 30, 1931, University of Wisconsin.

## THE KRAZE FOR "K"

"Hunting the letter" is nothing novel as a literary device, but it has its ups and downs and experiences its changes of fashion. Once we associated it mainly with poetry. Critics spoke for example of Swinburne's "alliterative obsession," citing lines like his striking apostrophe to Villon:

Bird of the bitter bright gray golden morn

or the beautiful lines from the *Atalanta* chorus:

The mother of months in meadow or plain  
With lisp of leaves and ripple of rain

Alliteration had its day of vogue also in the columns of newspapers. Journalists were in demand who could sprinkle a first page with striking alliterative headlines. Some classic examples of their skill which appeared respectively over accounts of a hanging and a murder are "Jerked to Jesus," and "Daring Devilish Dagoes Deal Death." The credit for killing alliteration as a literary device, or as an asset in newspaper headlines, is usually given to P. T. Barnum's publicity agent, Richard F. Hamilton. It was he who made orthodox for circus posters eulogies like "Peerless Prodigies of Physical Phenomena." "Daring Death-Defying Dēds Devilish in Their Desperate Departure from Deliberateness." Alliteration is still relied upon in circus poster advertising and vaudeville announcements, less often in notices of films. Pure literature has

ceased to compete. We read daily of "Sylvia Kantor, That Klassy Little Klown, in Artistic Buffoonery at the Orpheum," or of "Klaudia the Kute Kid of the Circuit," and their ilk.

As illustrated by the Klassy Klown and the Kute Kid, the present employment of alliteration is mostly confined to the letter "k," and the hunting of it appears most prominently in the language of advertising. For "k" in poetry there was Coleridge's (one is tempted to write Koleridge's) "Kubla Khan," and one recalls Walt Whitman's picturesque respellings "Kanada" and "Kana-dian." But love of "k" plays little part in contemporary verse, although it appears abundantly elsewhere. Its rise in favor seems to be bound up with the late agitation for simplified spelling, or the oncoming tide of interest in phonetics. Simplified orthography for advertising is perhaps the most important legacy of the defunct spelling reform movement.

Here is a list of alliterative names from the language of trade. It could be increased by any reader who is observant. Some day such names will no longer be thought attractive or picturesque. They will not be novel enough to catch the eye and therefore to promote sales. Perhaps they and ultra-jazz language in conversation and in journalistic writing will pass together. There are signs that both are beginning to pall a trifle. But, as yet, one who is observant of signs along the streets, or in the shops, or in the columns of newspapers and periodicals, will find makers of automobile goods, of paints, of implements, of fabrics, wearing apparel, and the like, relying conspicuously on alliteration with "k" in naming their products. Witness:

Kars Kleaned Klean. We Klean Klothes Klean. We Klean Klothes Kor-rectly. Kwality Kut Klothes. Kopper Kettle Klub Cigars. Keen Kutter Kutlery. Kumbach Koffee. Kamp Kook Stoves. Kandy Kid Orchestra. Kash and Karry Grocery. Simmons' K K Kord Tires. Kiddies' Koveralls. Kiddie Kars. Kiddie Klothes. Klean Kwick Auto Emergency Klenzer. Krank's Kreem for Shaving. Buxton's Key Kase saves the pockets. The Kum-a-Part Kuff Button. Korrek Koats. Kollege Kut Klothes. Keene's Kwality Kandies at the Kanditorium. Klay Kompact for Komplexions. Our Grocery Service Klean, Koncise, Kourteous. Our B V D's Klean, Kool, and Komfortable. See our Kumfy Kumforts. Klip-Klap Snaps for Rings. Kut-Kwik Razor Strop. The Klose Kloset Hamper. Klever Klippers for Bobby Hair. Kosy Klosure Ideal Auto Tops for Winter. Kute Kitchenettes. Kant-Leak Containers. Klever Klippers for Haircutters.

Following are examples, not of alliteration with "k" but of simplified or novel spellings secured through its use. They take

place alongside *Trunx*, *Inx*, *Shur-On* Eyeglasses, *Daintee-Maid* Waists, *Noe-Egul* Hosiery, *Holsum* Bread, *Kno-Glair* Electric Light Shades, *Wear-U-Well* Shoes, and other orthographic manipulations now liked by advertisers.

Soft Sole Kosy Toe Slippers. Klearflax Linen Rugs and Carpeting. Ko-rektiv White Oil. Kwickwork Auto Enamel. Kantleek Hot Water Bottle. Kardex for Record Cards. KisselKar Automobile. Anatomik Footwear. Klenzo Tooth Paste. Multikopy Carbon Paper. Kutzit Soap for mechanics. The Stanerek Suit for men. Spalding's Kroflite golf ball. Flintkote paint. Las-tik patch for tire blowouts. Tasty-Kake is the best. Non-Konstricting belt for men. Butter-Krust, the better bread. Nokol automatic oil heating. Rotarex Electric Kook-rite stoves. Kwik-pak Parcel Post laundry cases. Kwaliti-bilt face brick. Kleen Heet. Konkrete-bilt homes. Kolor Bak banishes gray hair. Non-Krush dress linen.

"Katherine the Komical Kow" and "Krazy Kat" and "Kewt Kwips for the Kiddies" have lately had a stellar rôle in newspaper lore for children and others.

The curious, better perhaps kurious, nomenclature of the Ku Klux Klan is said to constitute part of its spell for its members and to have helped its rapid spread. The Klan makes much of Klansmen and Klannishness. It numbers among its officers, if reports speak true, an Imperial Klaliff and a King Kleagle. It has a revised oath and a revised Kloran, scaled by a prayer of the Imperial Kludd. It holds an Imperial Kloncilium or Klonvocation, rumor says, and there are meetings in a Klavern. Could all this fail to contribute to its success?

The letter "c" is unnecessary in the English alphabet. It has either the value of "k" as in *cure* or of "s" as in *city*. We no longer need it, while there are letters which we do need but do not have, like a symbol for the vowel of *but* as over against the vowel of *full*. The letter "c" had an early start in our language. It was introduced with the Roman alphabet into older England; while "k" was of no very frequent appearance until after the Norman Conquest. But any meagerness in the use of "k" early in our language history is being compensated for now. In editorial columns and in the lore of newspaper humorists one finds spellings like *likker*, *ruf neks*, *nekking*, and *krool*. All in all, there is no mistaking the kall of "k" over our kountry, our kurious kontemporary kaving for it, and its konspicuous use in the klever koinages of kommerce.



## EXTENSIONS OF USAGE OF A PRONOUN<sup>1</sup>

The English pronoun of the third person neuter, *it*, has established itself as a substantive in various meanings, some of which are so widely current as to augur for them considerable vitality. An enumeration of these substantive uses in American English yields the following—approximately, I think, in the order of their appearance.

1. In game usage the person that is termed *it* has a specialized function making him the protagonist for the time being, as in the games of 'tag' and 'drop the handkerchief.' This usage of the word came to America, no doubt, along with the games employing it. Certainly 'tag' and 'drop the handkerchief' are not of indigenous origin but are imported. The *Oxford Dictionary* (vol. V. 1901) does not enter the game usage of the word, but it is included in Wright's *English Dialect Dictionary* ("It . . . In games the 'he' or central figure, the person who has the innings"), and in the larger American dictionaries.

2. Deriving perhaps from game usage is the American slang or colloquial usage appearing in expressions like 'She thinks she's it,' 'That officer thinks he's it,' the implication being that the person in question thinks him or herself of especial importance. A social-literary club of my acquaintance once voted to have no officer save a single supreme one called 'It,' a permanent controlling officer who sometimes appointed a 'Vice-It' or 'Sub-It' to officiate during her absence. According to a definition given me by an academic

<sup>1</sup> Read at the sixth annual meeting of the Linguistic Society of America in Cleveland, Ohio, on December 31, 1929.

devotee of this substantive, a person who thinks himself 'it' believes that he is the 'king pin' or 'head potentate' of his circle.

This colloquial usage is not entered in dictionaries. It does not appear in the *Oxford Dictionary* nor in the larger American dictionaries. Wright's *English Dialect Dictionary* does not cite it as existent in England. It seems to be American, and of twentieth-century establishment. During the Russo-Japanese war, when the addition of the suffix *-ski* was in vogue for jocosely formations, one heard occasionally on college campuses sentences like 'She thinks she's Madame Ittski,' 'There go Mr. Ittski and Mr. Smartski.'

3. Another widely current usage of the pronoun gives it the meaning of stupid person, fool, or rustic. In this sense the pronoun is sometimes capitalized: 'Such an It,' 'The big It sneezed in my face,' 'The It didn't know enough to come in out of the rain.' This usage is not recorded in dictionaries of the standard language. It is not mentioned in the English historical dictionary. Wright enters *it* as a term of contempt and as often used of infants, but not in the American way. Compare: 'Some fooak says id as if they were tawkin' abeawt a hinsekt when they meean their husband, child, wife or parent,' 'What a hawhaw it is to call itsen a parson.'

4. Last and most recent is the use launched by Elinor Glyn a few years ago (1926) in a film entitled 'It', starring Clara Bow. The impetus for its spread, though the term may have had occasional theatrical use earlier, came unmistakably from the Hollywood moving picture. Mrs. Glyn meant by *it* personal magnetism or attractiveness. In this sense the word was quickly taken up by cinema enthusiasts, by journalists, and by young people, and it is now familiar everywhere.

Further, this usage has its own extensions. The adjective *itty* followed at the heels of Mrs. Glyn's new substantive. Sentences like these may be gathered from oral usage, from film journals, or from advertisements: 'She is a very itty actress,' 'That actress is not so itty as she thinks.' Often the adjective is compared: 'Buddy Rogers is ittier than other youths of the screen,' 'Clara Bow is the ittiest actress of them all.' A compound *itfulness* was used in a motion picture magazine of the date of November, 1929: 'There they stood [the hero and heroine], the very picture of itfulness.' Another compound heard occasionally is *ittishness*: 'There was a certain ittishness about the sisters.'

## PLURAL-SINGULARS FROM LATIN NEUTERS

The confusion in the American vernacular of Latin loan-words having the singular in *-um* and the plural in *-a* (*curriculum*, *curricula*) with Latin loan-words having the singular in *-a* and the plural in *-ae* (*formula*, *formulae*)—the former neuter in gender and the latter feminine—has brought many usages disconcerting to the classical specialist. The tendency to make the plurals of foreign words conform to native patterns, and to look upon plurals that do not so conform as singulars, has operated since the first loan-words entered our English language. We have many regularized plurals that we may now use without self-consciousness, like *curriculums*, *emporiums*, *mediums*, *funguses*, *cactuses*, *indexes*, *formulas*. Other words, like the Latin masculines, *alumnus*, *stimulus*, have been slower to surrender their historic plurals.

Here is a brief list of the Latin plurals most frequently suffering Americanization. The examples cited are drawn from oral sources and from the columns of newspapers and from advertising matter. When the users of these words employ them in the plural, they add *-s*, thus making them, from the historical point of view, double plurals. Among these words, *data* is the plural form used oftenest as a singular. *Insignia* comes next, I think.

*curricula*—"The curricula of our courses has been changed lately to accommodate pupils who expect to attend college." "This curricula of the Arts

College needs revision." "These curriculars are as perfect as we can make them."

*data*—"This data has been gathered carefully." "His data is not germane." "The data in this circular is based upon information, official statements, and statistics."

*dicta*—"The dicta of the speaker was admitted to be authoritative." "This dicta, coming from a man like Stuart P. Sherman, should not be overlooked." "Such dictas are to be expected from the government at Washington."

*emporia*—"A new drygoods emporia has lately been established." "There are various clothing emporias along Market Street."

*insignia*—"That gold-star insignia means that he has driven the taxi without accidents." "What is the insignia of the Shriners?" "Their insignia is very attractive."

*media*—"It was finally decided to allot a definite media to each member." "One of the best advertising medias in the Middle West."

*memoranda*—"This was the memoranda I made in my notebook." "Among the memorandas left on his desk."

*strata*—"This strata is one of the most interesting in the geological formations of our state." "These stratas well deserve study."

Greek neuters like *criterion*, *ganglion*, *phenomenon* are treated in the same way, e.g., "this criteria," "these criterias," "a ganglia," "these phenomenas," "a remarkable phenomena." One hears also "criteria" (now standard) and "phenomenons," as in "infant phenomenons."

The popular tendency to create singulars from Latin masculine plurals, "an alumni," "a stimuli," "a literati," "a syllabi," and to add -s to form new plurals, "alumnis," "stimulis," "literatis," "syllibis,"<sup>1</sup> is nearly as common as the tendency to treat Latin neuter plurals as singulars and then give them regularized English plurals in -s.

1927

<sup>1</sup> For further illustration, see my "The Pluralization of Latin Loan-Words in English," *The Classical Journal*, December, 1919.

## POPULAR VARIANTS OF "YES"

Foreigners and teachers of speech often remark concerning the lessening use in our American spoken language of the standard affirmative *yes*. It still has written or literary existence but it seems to be disappearing from oral speech. *Yes* is a compound of *yea-so*, or perhaps of the old optative of the verb *to be*, Anglo-Saxon *gea si*, "yea be it." It was well established by the sixteenth century alongside the historic affirmative *yea* and the competing *aye*, which appeared in the last part of the century. *Yes* is now being replaced, in its turn, by a variety of forms. A canvass of substitutes for it in a room containing more than a hundred young people brought to light the following list of thirty-nine forms. Substitutes like "All right," "You bet," "Sure," or "O.K." (*okeh*, *okay*) and the group of nasal utterances, *nh-nh*, *uh-uh*, etc. (the intonation pattern is all important), termed by Professor Fred Newton Scott the "colloquial nasals,"<sup>1</sup> were not taken into account.

All the forms listed below were known to many persons among the hundred or more questioned. Those known to but one or two individuals were not included.

yip  
yep  
yap

yop, yahp  
yup  
yurp

<sup>1</sup> "The Colloquial Nasals" in *The Standard of American Speech and Other Papers*, 1926.

yah	yessir (yes sir) *
yeth	yea bo
yum	chess
yo	chass
yaw	chahss
yezz	chuss
yis	chassm (yes ma'am)
yuss	shassm (same)
yays	'es (baby talk)
yass	hya
yahss	yar (expressing disbelief or in-
yazz	credulity), yare
yahzz	yair (same)
ye-us	eye-yah
ye-yuss	chow (the first element of the
yeh	diphthong like the <i>a</i> of <i>hat</i> )
ye-ah ( O ye-ah expressing dis- belief or derision)	

Mainly these mutilated forms of *yes*, or substitutes for it, are colloquial. Their speakers wish to seem whimsical or jocose. But they are employed consistently and many who say them seem never to use *yes* in its standard form.

1925

\* A few years after this account was written came the currency of *yow-sah*, through the agency of Amos and Andy of radio fame, and of the progeny hatched out by *O.K.*, *oky-doky*, *oksy-doksy*, *okums-dokums* and *oke*.

## NOTES ON THE VERNACULAR

### THE HUMOROUS "R"

The history of the English *r* down the centuries, of its various developments, insertions, omissions, and transpositions, is one of the most interesting phases of the history of English sounds. Before the Norman Conquest, in some regions and in some positions, it was a type of gargled *r*, made in the back of the mouth. Since that period many varieties have been developed or handed down, from the trilled consonant of Chaucer's time to the various American *r*'s of our own period. These range from a light vowel-like *r* (which is lost before consonants and also finally, in some parts of New England and the South) to the "coronal" sound, made with the tip of the tongue turned back on the roof of the mouth, which appears in the Central West. It is this latter *r* which so annoys fastidious observers, such as cultured Britons touring the United States, and which is anathema to teachers of oral expression. On the whole, *r* is the most unstable of English consonants. It is often lost, often intrudes, and often shifts its position; and it has evoked more heated controversy than any other consonant.

The theme of the following brief discussion is the rôle played by it among humorists, for whom certain stock usages have arisen. The moment we encounter the added *r*'s of *purp* or *dorg* in our reading we know that we have to do with humor, and so with *school-marm*. The added consonants are supposed to be spoken,

if the words are uttered, but, as a matter of fact, they are less often uttered than seen. The words are, indeed, largely visual forms; the humor is chiefly for the eye. The American humorist of the Civil War period, Artemus Ward (Charles Farrar Brown, 1834–1867) contributed a good deal toward giving currency to such added *r*'s. He liked to write *orifice*, *orf*, *orfullest*, *perlitical*, *pollerticks* and similar forms. Brown relied very largely for his jocular effects on such vagaries of writing. Like James Russell Lowell in *The Biglow Papers*, he favored ungrammatical forms and illiterate spellings, and his leading characters represented themselves as illiterates. We have gone far beyond his crude usages in our own time, especially since the days of O. Henry. A writer, seeking piquancy, may now deliberately re-spell in his own person, without pretense of illiteracy, as when columnists write "*chawmed*, I'm *suah*," *thanx*, or "when this *crool* war is over." As for O. Henry, when his characters go wrong with words there is always something beyond mere misspelling. Witness his "Crow Knob—a kind of *dernier resort* in the mountains," or "I'm not a pre-ordained disciple of *S. Q. Lapius*. I never took a course in a medical college," or "It's time for Spelling Reform to butt in and *disenvowel* it."

To return to *r*, we have been educated in these days to recognize its omission as well as its addition to be humorous. For example, from the standard forms *burst* and *curse* have arisen *bust* and *cuss*, with the past participles *busted* and *cussed*. These have proved to be so useful that it is now unlikely that we shall ever give them up. Long before the Norman Conquest the ancestors of the forms *speak* and *speech* arose by omission of *r* from forms in which it had been present. Had it persisted, as in the related German *sprachen*, *spreak* and *spreech* would now be our normal forms. Perhaps *busted* and *cussed* will someday seem as dignified as *speak* and *speech*. On the omission of the *r* in humorous forms, as well as its addition, Artemus Ward, with his large reliance on spellings for jocular effects, had much influence. His pages exhibit *nuss*, *nussin*, *scacely* for *scarcely*, and he writes "*putty* as an angel" where other humorists might have written *purty*. Josh Billings (Henry Wheeler Shaw 1818–1885) and Petroleum V. Nasby (David Ross Locke, 1833–1888) venture *hoss* for *horse*, *fust* for *first*, *pusley* for *parsley*, *pussy* for *pursy*, and *puss* for *purse*; and every experienced reader detects at once from the omission of the *r* that the forms are intended to be funny.



In American humor, the added *r*'s of words like *marm*, *dorg*, *purp* are supposed to be spoken. In English humorous writing the story is otherwise. Weakened *r* after a vowel disappeared in the eighteenth century in England. Walker's Dictionary of 1775 admits its muteness. After the eighteenth century *-ar* popularly indicated the sound of the vowel in *father*, and written forms like *arnswer*, *marm*, *larf*, *harf*, *larst* and *blarst*, are to be read with the broad vowel but no uttered *r*. Similarly, says Alexander J. Ellis in his monumental work on English pronunciation, "when Dickens wrote Count *Smorl Tork*, he meant *Small Talk* and no ordinary reader would distinguish between them." Dickens's *Smorl Tork* appears in "The Pickwick Papers" and so do Brother *Mordlin* (maudlin) of the Ebenezer Temperance Association, and Sawyer, late *Knock-emorf* (knock 'em off). British humorous writers place in the mouths of the uneducated many forms like *orter* (ought to), *warter*, *darter*, *gorn*, *orsepittle*; but these are not to be read with the *r* sounded.

When Britons wish to indicate *r*'s that are unmistakably sounded they have to double them. Here is a passage from Henry James's "The Question of Our Speech" showing how he was affected after his years in England by our mid-western *r*'s:

The letter, I grant, gets terribly little rest among those great masses of our population who strike us, in the boundless West perhaps especially, as, under some strange impulse received toward consonantal recovery of balance, making it present even in words from which it is absent, bringing it in everywhere as with the small vulgar effect of a sort of morose grinding of the back teeth. There are, you see, sounds of a mysterious intrinsic meanness, and there are sounds of a mysterious intrinsic frankness and sweetness; and I think the recurrent note I have indicated—*fatherr*, and *motherr* and *otherr*, *waterr*, and *materr* and *scatterr*, *harrrd* and *barrd*, *parrrt*, *starrrt* and (dreadful to say) *arrrt* (the repetition it is that drives home the ugliness)—are signal specimens of what becomes of a custom of utterance out of which the principle of taste has been dropped.

Final *r* has its significance also. When American humorists write *feller*, *otter* (ought to), *Mariar*, *Ednar*, *popper*, *mommer*, *holler* (from halloo), we know that we have to do with the facetious, even though the speakers may not be downright illiterates. *Winder* may also belong here; although there is a folk-etymological origin for the *-r* which might be taken into account. In the *Hudibras* of Samuel Butler (1663) occurs—

Love is a burglarer, a felon  
That at the *windore-eie* does steal in.

But historically *window* means eye of the wind; the *-ow* is cognate with *eye* and no door is involved, as in Butler's extended form.

There is also a final added *r* in better usage in Britain and the United States which sometimes goes by the name of hiatus *r*. When New Englanders, be they social characters or academic, who like British ways say *idear*, or "see the future of *Americar* as in a *vistar*," or speak of *Louisar* Alcott, we are not to take their usage to be humorous, for it has considerable standing in these instances. Phonetically, there is little difference between the unlettered *feller* or *winder* and the cultured *idear*; but the added *r* has little standing in the one usage, while it has the authority of many reputable speakers in the other. This interesting hiatus *r* had its origin in the confusion arising through the practice of British speakers of dropping final *r* before a consonant and keeping it before a vowel, as in *Westminster* Abbey and *Westminste(r)*, or in "*better* and *bette(r)*." The word *better* has two forms in this phrase as it is spoken by most of those who drop their *r*'s—one retaining the sound before a vowel and the other dropping it. Out of the confusion thus arising many *r*'s came to be added after final vowels, where none was historically justified, as "a *Chinar* ornament" or "the great actress *Modjeskar*" or "Queen *Henriettar* *Mariar*."

The humor is unconscious, not a device of authors, in those who omit *r* in the telescoped *vetinery*, *itinery*, *labatory*, *contemporary* and *deteriate*. An *r* is often dropped by unacademic speakers in weak syllables where there is repetition. In the *littery* of the columnists, as in references to the "*Littery* Review" or "us *lirty* fellers," yet another usage is represented. These are mainly forms employed for flippancy.

The differences in the mode of handling *r*, in the phonetic shades of its formation, in what is happening to it, and in how it influences neighboring vowels, are bringing in their wake some of the chief divergences between British and American English. Not individual words here and there but whole tracts of words which are part of the essential fabric of the language are being affected by changes in the utterance of *r* or by its weakening and loss. In Britain an *o* before *r* is open, while in the United States it is prevailing closer. Thus an American who omits final *r* might rhyme *bore* and *Noah*, but to Britons *bore* and *gnawer* would be more exact rhymes, or *more* and *maw*, *door* and *daw*. Keats rhymed *crosses* and *horses*; Kipling rhymed *court*, *wrought* and *report*; and a recent British

laureate rhymed *vase* and *Mars*. Across the Atlantic *vista* and *sister* make good rhymes to the ear, while on this side they bring the same type of smile that is brought to the faces of contemporary Britons by Whittier's well-remembered rhymes of *swarthy* and *Martha* and *pen* and *been*.

## II. NOVEL COMPARISON OF ADJECTIVES

A love of the exaggerated use of terminational comparative forms seems to be shared by poets and humorists. We are accustomed to the formation of the comparatives of *patient* and *wretched* with *more* and *most*; yet Swinburne writes *patienter*, *wretcheder* and *splendid* without their seeming conspicuous. Among humorists and dialect writers the terminational comparison of unexpected adjectives has come to be a staple device for producing humorous effect. For a first example, take the comparison of the present participle. There was novelty in the form for print when Dickens wrote *leakingest* or Walt Whitman *lovingest*, but such comparatives are now frequent. A casual examination of current magazine fiction brings to light, "the *fightingest* man I ever saw," "the *toppingest* morning of the year," "the *leakingest* old boat I was ever in," "the *high-steppingest* chorus girl of them all," and "the *kissingest* kid I ever knew." "'Treat 'Em Rough,' the latest and *laughingest* book by the author of 'Four Weeks in France,'" is from a publisher's advertisement. An automobile racer announced last year in advance of an international competition, "My car will be the *goingest* hack I ever had." William Hard, writing in a recent number of the *Nation*, pronounces Senator Burton K. Wheeler, the tail of the La Follette national ticket ". . . the *stingingest* of all this year's stinging tails."

To revert to Dickens, we find him placing *naturalest*, *seasonablest*, *crookedest* and *delightfulest* in the mouths of his comic characters. Lewis Carroll makes Alice in Wonderland use the form *curiouser*. These seem tame enough beside our present "the *orphantest* child in the asylum," "the *womanishest* of the lot," "the *lunatickest* of them all," "I feel *resteder* now," "the *outlandishest* hat," "the *spindliest* legs."

A magazine story has its dialect characters say *consaiteder*, *unjustest*, and *modheratest*. A newspaper remarks of the passing of Fourth of July celebrations in the big cities that "the scene grows more pathetic and *patheticker*."

Sometimes words already superlative in meaning show a superlative termination: "She is the *onliest* girl I ever loved," "He is the *allrightest* man I know." Double comparative forms such as *nicer*, *better*, and *more*, are heard from children, but they are also often placed in these days in the mouths of grown-ups. In the way of double superlatives one finds examples such as, "He did the *bestest* he could while his opponent did the *worstest*." The form *worser*, which was in good usage in the days of Elizabeth, is still to be found. Montague Glass, who wrote of Potash and Perlmutter, makes a character say, "Things go from bad to *worst*," and "He would get *worser* than a cold." Indeed the form *worse* merits treatment by itself. In the current facetious "not so *worse*," *worse* is moved from the comparative degree into the positive.

American dialect speech makes free usage of the superlative suffix *-most*. Here are to be recorded forms like *oldermost* and *bettermost*, which are superlatives built from comparatives, and *ablemost*, *farmost*, and *newmost*. Some similar British forms are *backermost*, *toppermost*, and *bottommost*. A recent whimsical usage from the titles of films is illustrated by the following examples, in which pronouns assume comparative forms for the first time in linguistic history: "She is a Wilmot, than which none are *whicher*," "She is a Van Alstyne, one of the *whomest* of the whom." The motto of the clergyman who exhorted his audience to "get on, get (*h*)onor, get (*h*)onest," was meant seriously. So were the pleonastic forms of "the *more outer* trenches of the enemy," in a newspaper article from the pen of a war correspondent, and the amusing "these formations are said to be *far more superior* than the Garden of the Gods," in an advertising circular.

### III. AMERICAN INDEFINITE NAMES <sup>1</sup>

Do other peoples show the same love for indefinite names and the same resourcefulness in coining them that is shown by Americans? The typical American, at least the fairly youthful American, would apparently rather call something a *thingumbob*, or a *dingus*, or a *doodad* than speak out the exact name. It seems more attractive to him to employ some indefinite term in current vogue than to go to the trouble to utter the specific word. If he fails to recall

<sup>1</sup> See the next paper for a newer and longer list showing how quickly such eccentric terms arise among us.

the latter instantly, or if he does not know it, his employment of some whimsical indefinite substitute is nearly inevitable. This device is supposed to provide that informal or non-serious touch which we go to such lengths in these days to obtain.

Following is a list of indefinite names recently collected in the Central West. It might easily be increased by a canvass of other regions, or by going through the volumes of *Dialect Notes*, the journal of the American Dialect Society, which endeavors to record deviations from standard English in all parts of the United States. One doubts whether the English Dialect Dictionary, that scholarly and valuable work compiled by Joseph and Mary Wright of Oxford, contains as long a list of such terms as a similar American dictionary would show if it existed. One suspects that a liking for coinages of this type is characteristically American. The topic of the relation of peculiarities or grotesqueries of language to race characteristics has been given little attention by philologists; yet our curious linguistic creations are usually interesting for their own sake, and they often have a certain social or psychological influence as well. The list of Central Western indefinite terms—many or most of which may be general over the United States—reads like this:

*Thingumbob, thingumabob, thingumajig, thingumajiggen, thingumadoodle, dingus, dingbat, doofunny, doojumfunny, doodad, doodaddle, doogood, dooflickus, dooflicker, doojohn, doojohnny, dooflinkus, doohickey, doobobbus, doobobble, doohinke, doobiddy, doohackey, gadget, whatyoumaycallit, fumadiddle, thinkumthankum, dinktum, jigger, faks, kadigin, thumadoodle, optriculum, ringumajig, ringumajing, ringumajiggen, hoopendaddy, thumadoodle, dibbie.*

#### IV. ABRIDGED WRITING

Artemus Ward employed a form of abridged writing, utilizing numerals, when he wrote "jest be4 elecshun" and "There4 I made bold to visit old Abe." Similar writings were popular with other humorists of his period. Petroleum V. Nasby wrote, "I wood reed 2 yoo the passij," and spokE of "sending a mishunary 2 Massychusits." Abridged writing is now frequently used as a device to catch the eye in advertising. A humorous or unconventional touch is designed, yet there is no pretense that the manipulated words come from illiterates. Some examples of the ingenious forms given to words or to commercial names in order to get public attention for






them are these: "*XLent* Brand of Salmon," "*Xtra* Fine Twilled Tape," "Phone Us *B4* U Buy," "*P-Cans* and *P-Nuts* for Sale," "*E. Z. Walker* Shoes," "Sherman *T* and Coffee House," "Call *Tel-U-Where* for our nearest distributor," "*Fits-U* Eyeglasses," "*U All Kno* After Dinner Mints," "Oysters *R* Now in Season," "*Unedea* Biscuit," "*Unedme* Chair Pad," "*U-Rub-It-In* Ointment." The trade slogan "Will *U C* Smith for Paper Hanging?" is used by a man named William C. Smith. To the same category belong signs like these:—"R *U* Interested in a Rummage Sale?" "R *U* Going to the Party at the Beach?"

A number of devices for simplified writing are current among children and young people. Since they concern language some of them deserve recording among notes on language, as well as in the collectanea of children's lore or folk-lore. The figure of a square preceding the word *deal* stands for a square deal. A letter *B* in the center of a square exhorts the reader to be on the square, and may either express a sentiment or fix a rendezvous. A *B* at the corner of a square is also easily interpreted. Capital letters are utilized in "He *XL's*," or "the State of *X-S-E*" or "*10-S-E*" (Tennessee), and here may be noted sentiments at the end of letters like "Yours as *b4*," and "Yours *10derly*." A rhyme popular among youngsters reads:

<i>Y Y U R</i>	Too wise you are,
<i>Y Y U B</i>	Too wise you be,
<i>I C U R</i>	I see you are
<i>Y Y 4 Me</i>	Too wise for me.

A popular abridged writing for "I understand you undertake to overthrow my undertaking" is—

	2	
stand	take	throw taking
I	U	my

Musical notation is also made use of for abbreviated writing in popular lore, *e.g.*, "Just a little ♪ to you." Some well-known mottoes for musicians run "*B*<sup>2</sup>,  but don't ," (Be square, be sharp, but don't be flat). Or "Always , never , always ," (Always be sharp, never be flat, always be natural).

## AMERICAN INDEFINITE NAMES

A few years ago I printed a list of indefinite names current in the Central West of the United States, and inquired whether speakers of other languages than English have the same fondness for such terms, or the same resourcefulness in handling them.<sup>1</sup> To avoid searching out *le mot propre*, Americans of the present generation like to make use of some whimsical indefinite substitute. The more eccentric the substituted term, the better we are pleased. The popularity of expressions of this character may be attributed, in part, to our present-day cult of the informal or flippant or eccentric, in colloquial speech. Some of the indefinite terms most widely used may, however, be very old. The *New English Dictionary* cites "thingum" and "thingummy" from the seventeenth century, and Fanny Burney referred to a "thing-em-bob" in the eighteenth.

The *grotesqueries* of language usually deserve to be recorded, for they have a certain sociological significance alongside their interest for linguists. My list of 1924 numbered thirty-eight expressions. The following display of terms current in the Central West in 1930 includes more than a hundred. A complete list could never be made. Such formations fluctuate constantly in popularity. New words are coined and find transient acceptance, and old ones pass from vogue.

<sup>1</sup> *The American Mercury*, October, 1924.

Most of the entries in my list were given me by many independent speakers—testimony that their use is not confined to individual neologists. They were collected from oral sources, though nearly all have been used here and there in print, by writers of dialogue for popular fiction or drama, or by newspaper humorists, and the like. The list is as complete and up-to-date, for the Central Western region, as I could make it.<sup>2</sup>

and what have you	dooflinkus
	dooflop
business	doofloppie
	doofloppus
contraption	doofunny
	doogadget
dibbie	dooginkus
dibbus	doogood
diddenwhacker	doohickie
diddledyflop	doohickus
diddleheimer	doohinkie
diddydum	doohinkus
dingbat	doohunkie
dingbattus	doohunkus
dinglet	doojebob
dingus	doojohn
dinktum	doojohnie
dodenwhacker	doojigger
doobob	doojiggie
doobobble	doojiggum
dobobbus	doojiggus
doobiddie	doojinnie
doobinnie	doojumfunny
doodad	doololly
doodaddle	doomiejig
doodaddy	doomawadja
doodibbie	doomiewadjie
doodiddie	doosenwhacker
doodingle	doowhacker
doodinkus	doowhackie
doodle	doowhopper
doodlefadgit	dudelheimer
dooflicker	dudenheimer
dooflickus	dudenwhacker
dooflinkie	

<sup>2</sup> This is a list for 1930. *Gadget* has continued to gain in status since then while many of the terms have dropped from use or are rare. Others such as *gimmick* and *gismo* (the latter a legacy of the last war) arise to replace them.



fakus	rigamajisser
fingumadiddle	rinktum
fixin	
floppus	snivvie
fumadiddle	
	thingabob
gadget	thingum
gazinkus	thingumabob
gewgaw	thingumading
gigumbobs	thingumadoodle
gilgadget	thingumajjie
gimcrack	thingumajig
goofus	thingumajiggen
	thingumajigger
hickie	thingumajiggus
hinkie	thingumajing
hooley	thingumajingie
hoofenpoofer	thingumgee
hookemsneevie	thingummie
hoop-de-doodle	thingumaree
hoopendaddy	thinkumthankum
hoopennany	thumadoodle
hootmalalie	
hootenannie	whangdoodle
hootnannie	whangydoodle
hooznannie	what have you
hop-and-go-fetchit	whatsis
	whatsit
jigger	whazzit
jiggie	whatthehell
jiggus	whatyoumajiggen
	whatyoumaycallit
kadigin	whatyoumayjiggie
kathob	whatyoumayjigger
	which-what
	whiffsnitz
	whindge
majig	whindgit
majiggie	whingding
	whoozit
outfit	widget
	wingding
rigamajig	
rigamajiggen	you-know-what

To the foregoing terms might be added, perhaps, *sandflapper*, given me from Texas, *gollywog* from Kansas, and *optriculum* from Nebraska. I feel doubtful of their currency—though their reporters

were trustworthy persons—since each was known to but one contributor. *Outfit*, which ordinarily has reference to equipment of some kind, has been reported, from states so widely separated as Wisconsin and Texas, as in occasional use as an indefinite name for ornaments, lesson-outlines, tools, or small objects of various kinds. *Whoozis* is, it seems, often used of things as well as of persons. *And what have you* and *what have you* are sometimes heard as substitutes for *et cetera*. They are commoner as indefinite names on the Eastern coast than in the Central West.

A glance at these coinages shows that their object is not economy of expression, for length seems to be a desideratum. Among them are no monosyllables, over thirty dissyllables, over forty trisyllables, more than twenty words of four syllables, and twelve terms of five syllables. Formations with *d-* as the initial sound are far in the lead for popularity. There are more than fifty of these, more than forty of which begin with *doo-*. Next in popularity come extensions of *thing-* and *what-*. Nasal infixes enjoy, it seems, considerable favor, as in *doohinkie*, *dooflinkus*, *thingumajing*. Among suffixes, *-ie*, or *-y*, which appears in more than thirty forms, leads in popularity, followed by *-us*, which appears in nearly twenty, *-er*, which appears in a dozen, *-le* in seven, *-um* in five, *-et* (*-it*) in five, and *-en* in two. Of the whole list, *gadget*, an importation from England that was more or less of a novelty ten years ago, seems to be the term now leading in favor, if we may judge from the frequency of its appearance in print, in journalistic usage or in popular fiction.

1930

## KING CNUT'S SONG AND BALLAD ORIGINS

King Cnut's song, according to Professor Gummere,<sup>1</sup> gives us our "first example of actual ballad structure and the ballad's metrical form, which is to be met in English records." He quotes the account from the *Historia Eliensis* of 1166. Cnut, with his queen Emma and divers of the great nobles, was coming by boat to Ely, and, as they neared land, the King stood up, and told his men to row slowly while he looked at the great church and listened to the song of the monks which came sweetly over the water. "Then he called all who were with him in the boats to make a circle about him, and in the gladness of his heart he bade them join him in song, and he composed in English a ballad [*cantilenam*] which began as follows:

Murie sungen the muneches binnen Ely,  
Tha Cnut ching rew ther by.

Roweth, cnihtes, noer the land,  
And here we thes muneches saeng!

The chronicler turns this into Latin, saying then, "and so the rest, as it is sung in these days by the people in their dances, and handed down as proverbial."

The Latin original reads: *quae usque hodie in choris publice cantantur; et in proverbiiis memorantur.*<sup>2</sup> Professor Gummere takes

<sup>1</sup> *The Popular Ballad*, pp. 58 ff., 249; also *Old English Ballads*, 254.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Gale, *Historiae Britannicae, Saxonicae, Anglo-Danicae, Scriptores*, 2 vols. Oxford, 1691, Vol. 1, p. 505. *Quo difficultate ad suam festivitatem Rex Canutus in Ely pervenit, et de longe audiens Monachos cantilenam composuit.*

many chances when he translates, with the certainty implied by italics, *in choris publice* as "sung in their dances." The classical Latin *chorus* had three meanings—a choral dance, the persons singing and dancing, and a crowd or throng of any kind. For mediæval Latin *chorus*, the meaning choral dance fades. The citations given by Ducange<sup>3</sup> refer to groups of singing people, often ecclesiastics, and they do not imply dancing by the participants in the singing. The presence of the dance element in the twelfth century singing of Cnut's song is anything but certain. But let that pass for the moment. The validity of the song as material for illustration of ballad history turns, it seems to me, upon whether the missing lines are epic or lyric, i. e., whether the piece was a ballad or merely a song. If it was lyrical only, or the chronicler's story of its origin posthumous and spurious, the four lines are of doubtful value for affording us our first glimpse of actual ballad structure. But, granting that the chronicler's story is genuine, or fairly so, and that the missing verses were epic, these things may be noted:

1. The improvisation pictured is the King's, as he is surrounded by his nobles. It is aristocratic, not humble. If the ascription of the song to Cnut himself be denied, the authorship must go to his professional bards.

2. Cnut's song is not, in its origin, a dance song, whether or not it became one. The King's boat would be no appropriate place for a typical festal throng to dramatize a ballad—that species which, according to the current American view, is differentiated from other lyric verse chiefly by having had its origin in the dance. The testimony of the chronicler and of the song itself points to the inference that it started as a rowing song. Many Danish songs seem to have been rowing songs, judging from their refrains. Here are some illustrations:<sup>4</sup>

All ye row off. No. 124.

Betake yourself to the oar. No. 140.

To the north—

And now lay all these oars beside the ship. No. 460.

<sup>3</sup> *Glossarium Mediae et Infimae Latinitatis*. Equally venturesome is Professor Gummere's translation of *cantilena* as ballad rather than song.

<sup>4</sup> From *The Mediæval Popular Ballad* of J. C. H. R. Steenstrup, translated by E. G. Cox. The numerical references are to Grundtvig's *Danmark's Gamle Folkeviser*.

Row off noble men!

To the maiden. No. 244 (Norwegian).

Row out from the shore, ye speak with so fair a one! No. 399.

Cnut's song ranges itself very well beside these—

Row, cnihtes, noer the land,

3. As to form, the song presents no very clear testimony. There is rhyme, possibly, though not certainly. The assumption of it necessitates giving the name *Ely* a final accent. The septenar rhythm is absent, as expected in a twelfth century lyric. There is some alliteration, "murie sungen the muneches," and "Cnut ching" and "cnihtes," but this, like the rhyme, may be accidental. The form is not that used by the Old English professional bards, but is more lyrical. Whether there was strophe structure, say two or four lines, rhymeless or rhymed, with refrain,<sup>5</sup> is not clear from the lines that remain to us. Nor should it be forgotten that they do not come down to us in eleventh but in twelfth century form.

4. If the chronicler gives the history of the song accurately, and Professor Gummere interprets *choris publice* correctly, that history follows a usual process. There is origin among upper circles, descent among and preservation by the people, and utilization of the song by them as a dance song. Compare *The Hunt Is Up* of the reign of Henry VIII, used long after its upper circle origin widely and popularly as a dance song.

If Cnut's song is a ballad, or narrative song, it points to aristocratic emergence for this species, and away from its origin in the festal dances of villagers. I believe, however, that Professor Gummere's latest position<sup>6</sup> is that, having originated as dance songs, ballads became real ballads, i.e., narrative songs, only by "augmentations," by an "epic process" after they have become "divorced from the dance."

The conditions that produced the mediæval ballads are supposed by Professor Gummere to have prevailed till about the close of the fifteenth century, after which communal ballads can no more be made, because of changed social conditions; ballad-making becomes

<sup>5</sup> *Deor's Complaint* from the Exeter Manuscript of Cnut's century, with its two to seven lines plus refrain, has similar structure, but is more literary—is less simple and oral.

<sup>6</sup> *The Popular Ballad*, 1907, and his chapter in *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, 1908.

a "closed account." The eleventh century ought to be early enough, then, to be valid for illustration of ballad origins. How does Cnut's song help the theories of the communalists, in particular of the Harvard school of communalists? It did not originate in the dance, as it should have done to be an early ballad—indeed we do not know that it was ever a ballad at all, in theme or structure; and, if it was ever utilized as a dance song, it was at a time when it should have been divorcing itself from the dance and submitting to the "epic process."

*1919*

## LOWELL'S "BRETON LEGEND"

Lowell's patriotic philosophical poem "The Washers of the Shroud," upholding Unionism, was written in October, 1861, and published in the *Atlantic Monthly* in November of that year (VIII, 641-643). A familiar passage in a letter he wrote to his friend Charles Eliot Norton (*Letters*, I, 318) throws light on its inception: "I had just two days allowed me by Fields for the November *Atlantic*, and I got it done. It had been in my head some time, and when you see it you will remember my having spoken to you about it. Indeed, I owe it to you, for the hint came from one of those books of Souvestre's you lent me—the Breton Legends."

So far as I know, the legend to which Lowell referred has never been identified. The French novelist, Émile Souvestre, who was at the height of his fame in Lowell's day, was deeply interested in folklore and wished to preserve the traditional tales of the peasantry of his native region. He published *Les derniers Bretons*, descriptive of the manners and customs of the Bretons, in 1836, and in 1844 *Le Foyer Breton: contes et récits populaires*, in which the folklore and various other features of his beloved Brittany are served up in story form. The tale which gave Lowell his "hint" was, I believe, "Les Lavandières de Nuit" ("The Washerwomen of Night") of *Le Foyer Breton*. Souvestre represented it as told to him by a peasant from Guinessen in the province of Léon: its subtitle is "Récit du Guissien." Some of Souvestre's Breton tales are of happy character.

Others, like that of the Washerwomen, show a turn for the weird, setting forth especially the fate of those who brave evil spots at midnight. Lowell did not owe much more than his "hint" to his Breton source. He changed the fateful washerwomen from whom he had the title of his poem into the "ancient three," "the implacable three," Clotho, Lachesis, Atropos of Greek mythology and Urth, Verthandi, and Skuld of Norse. He, however, like the protagonist in Souvestre's story, walked at night under a "pallid moon."

An initial footnote in Souvestre's tale states that the belief in the phantom washerwomen is current through all Brittany but especially among the Léonnais. The story is of a youth, Wilherm Postik, whose father died without receiving absolution and who cared only for forbidden pleasures. God sent him warnings but to no avail. When the time came for the annual feast of the dead, held to pray souls from purgatory, instead of attending to pray for his ancestors Wilherm went to the neighboring town and did not make the return journey from his roistering till midnight.

But his heart was hot with drink. He sang aloud along the road songs which usually even the boldest would only whisper; he passed the crucifixes without lowering his voice or lifting his hat; and he struck the thickets of broom with his stick right and left, without fear of wounding the souls which fill the ways upon that day.

At a crossroads he took the short way back, though it was haunted by the dead, instead of the long way which was under the protection of God. As he passed an old ruined manor, the weathercock said to him, "Go back, go back, go back!" When he reached a cascade, the water murmured, "Do not pass, do not pass, do not pass!" As he reached a worm-eaten oak, the wind whistling through the branches repeated, "Stay here, stay here, stay here!" At last he entered the haunted valley. Soon he heard the sound of a cart covered with a pall, coming toward him. He recognized it as a hearse, driven by a phantom, who said, "I am seeking Wilherm Postik."

The merry Wilherm burst into laughter and went on.

As he reached the little hedge of blackthorn which led into the washing-place, he saw two women in white who were hanging linen upon the bushes.

"Upon my life! here are some young girls who are not afraid of the dew," said he. "Why are ye out so late, my little doves?"

"We are washing, we are drying, we are sewing," answered the two women at once.

"But what?" asked the young man.

"The shroud of a dead man who still walks and talks."



"A dead man! Good Lord! What is his name?"

"Wilherm Postik."

The fellow laughed louder than at first, and went on down the rough little path. But as he advanced, he heard more and more distinctly the blows of the wooden beetles of the Washerwomen of Night, against the stones; and soon he could see them themselves pounding their gravecloths as they sang the sad refrain:—

"Unless a Christian our fate can stay  
We must wash and wash until Judgment Day;  
To the sound of the wind in the moon's pale light,  
We must wash and wash our grave-cloths white."

As soon as they saw the merry fellow, all ran up to him and cried out, offering him their winding sheets and asking him to wring them out.

In the end, Wilherm's encounter with the Washerwomen of Night brings him a weird death at their hands.

1940

# **BIBLIOGRAPHY, PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES AND VITA**

by

*Mamie Meredith and Ruth Odell*

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Reprinted also in *Current Thinking and Writing*. Edited by Joseph M. Bachelor and Ralph N. Henry. (New York: Appleton-Century, 1946), 151-156.

## G

"Give Him Jesse." *American Speech*, XXI (April, 1946), 151-53.

"Goldsmith's *The Deserted Village*. Edited with Introduction, Notes and an Appendix. (New York: Ginn and Company, 1907, xxxi + 33.)

*Goldsmith's The Deserted Village and Gray's Elegy in a Country Churchyard*. Reissue with the *Elegy* added (1909). xxxi + 64.

*Goldsmith's The Deserted Village, The Traveller, and Gray's Elegy*. Reissue with *The Traveller* added (1916, 1925). xxxi + 90.

"Graduate Work for Women." *School and Society*, XV (May 27, 1922), 573-78.

Read at the meeting of the National Association of Deans of Women, February 25, 1922, at Chicago.

"The Great Horn Spoon." *American Speech*, XXI (April, 1946), 155.

## H

"Helen Hunt Jackson ('H.H.')." *Dictionary of American Biography*, IX (1932), 541-43.

"High School Ballad Composition." *English Journal*, XVIII (June, 1929), 495-97.

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"The History of English Literature: What It Is and What It Is Not." *English Journal*, VII (September, 1918), 413-18.

## I

*Ideals and Models*. Pound, Law, Stenberg, Wimberly, Callahan. (New York: Holt and Company, 1935, 850 pp.)

"Indefinite Composites and Word-Coinage." *Modern Language Review*, VIII (July, 1913), 324-30; also in *University of Nebraska Studies*, XIII (1913), 407-415.

"Indefinite Numbering." *American Speech*, XXIV (October, 1949).

"Intentional Mispronunciations in the Central West." *Dialect Notes*, V (1922), 133-38.

"Intrusive Nasals in Present-Day English." *Englische Studien*, XLV (1912), 258-71.

"Intrusive Nasals in English." *Modern Language Notes*, XXX (February, 1915), 45-47.

Introduction to *Homer's Iliad*. Modern Reader's Library. (New York: Macmillan & Co., 1930, 460 pp.)

## J

"The Jocularizing of French Words and Phrases in Present-Day American Speech." *Dialect Notes*, V (December, 1920), 77-79.

"Joe Bowers' Again." *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, I (September, 1937), 13-15.

## K

"King Cnut's Song and Ballad Origins." *Modern Language Notes*, XXXIV (March, 1919), 162-65.

"The Kraze for 'K'." *American Speech*, I (October, 1925), 43-44.

## L

"The Linguistics of Dreams." *American Speech*, IX (October, 1934), 175-80.  
*Read before the Present-Day English Section of the Modern Language Association, December 29, 1933, St. Louis.*

"Literary Anthologies and the Ballad." *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, VI (September, 1942), 127-41.

*Read at the Western Folklore Conference, July 10, 1942, Denver.*

"The Locus of Podunk." *American Speech*, IX (February, 1934), 80.

"Lover's Leap Legends." *Western Folklore*, VIII (October, 1949).

*Read at the Western Folklore Conference at the University of Denver, July 15, 1949.*

"Lowell's Breton Legend." *American Literature*, XII (November, 1940), 348-50.

## M

"Maurice Hewlett on Ballads." Literary Review of the New York *Evening Post*, (September 24, 1921).

"Mr. Bush on Ballads." Literary Review of the New York *Evening Post*, (June 9, 1923).

"Monk Lewis in Nebraska." *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, IX (June, 1945), 107-10.

"More Joe Bowers Lore." *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, II (September, 1938), 31-33.

## N

"Nebraska Cave Lore." *Nebraska History*, XXIX (December, 1948), 299-323.

"A Nebraska Folk Song." *Folk-Lore*, XXXIII (March, 1922), 113-15.

"The Nebraska Legend of Weeping Water." *Western Folklore*, VI (October, 1947), 305-16.

*Read at the Western Folklore Conference at the University of Denver, July 10, 1947.*

"Nebraska Snake Lore." *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, X (September, 1946), 163-76.

*Read at the Western Folklore Conference at the University of Denver, July 20, 1944.*

"Nebraska Strong Men." *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, VII (September, 1943), 133-43.

*Read at the Western Folklore Conference at the University of Denver, July 16, 1943.*

"Nebraska Rain Lore and Rain Making." *California Folklore Quarterly*, V (April, 1946), 129-42.

*Read at the Western Folklore Conference at the University of Denver, July 13, 1945.*

"The New American Dictionary." *American Mercury*, XXIX (July, 1933), 348-50.

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"Additional Notes," *Dialect Notes*, IV, 166-304.

"Change of a Medial Unaccented Vowel," 166; "Another Type of 'Stretch-Form'," (See IV, 52-53), 166; "More Instances of Transposition of Syllables," 166.

Also IV, 303-04: "Backward Spellings," 303; "Inversions," (See IV, 51) 166; "Addenda to IV, 166 (analogical change in middle syllables); "Domestication of a Suffix," (-ski), 304; "Some College Usages," 304.

Also "Odd Formations," IV, 353-54: "Domestication of the Suffix -fest," 354;

- Addenda to IV, 304; "Some Haplologic Shortenings," 354; "More Intrusive Nasals," 355.
- "Notes on Certain Verb Contractions in the Present Tense." *University of Nebraska Studies*, III (1903), 223-28.
- "Notes on Tennyson's Lancelot and Elaine," *Modern Language Notes*, XIX (1904), 50-51.
- "Notes on the Vernacular." *American Mercury*, III (October, 1924), 233-37.
- "The Humorous R"; "Novel Comparison of Adjectives"; "American Indefinite Names"; "Abridged Writing."
- Reprinted in *Readings from the American Mercury*. Edited by Grant C. Knight. (Knopf, 1924), 292-304.
- Notice of *Ballads and Sea Songs of Newfoundland*. Edited by Elisabeth B. Greenleaf and Grace Y. Mansfield. *Saturday Review of Literature*, X (October 21, 1933), 203.
- Notice of *Folk Tales of Missouri*. By Earl A. Collins. *American Literature*, VII (January, 1936), 400.
- Notice of *The Ozarks: A Survival of Primitive Society*. By Vance Randolph. *American Speech*, VII (April, 1932), 305.

## O

- "Old Nebraska Folk Customs." *Nebraska History*, XXVIII (January-March, 1947), 3-31.
- Read at the Western Folklore Conference at the University of Denver, July 11, 1946.*
- "Oral Literature," *Cambridge History of American Literature* IV (1921), 502-16.
- "The Oxford Supplement." *American Mercury*, XXXI (April, 1934), 504-06.

## P

- "The Pageant in Retrospect," *Alumni Journal*, University of Nebraska (June 11, 1916).
- "Parent English and Our Own." *Saturday Review of Literature*, XX (September 2, 1939), 17.
- "The Pedigree of a Western Song." *Modern Language Notes*, XXIX (January, 1914), 30-31.
- "Peter Funk: The Pedigree of a Westernism." *American Speech*, IV (February, 1929), 183-86.
- "Pleonasms." *American Speech*, I (September, 1926), 660.
- "The Pluralization of Latin Loan-Words in Present-Day American Speech." *Classical Journal*, XV (December, 1919), 163-68.
- "Plural-Singulars from Latin Neuters." *American Speech*, III (October, 1927), 26-27.
- "On Poe's 'The City in the Sea'." *American Literature*, VI (March, 1934), 22-27.
- Read before the American Literature Section of the Modern Language Association, December 29, 1932, Yale University.*
- "Poe's 'The City in the Sea' Again." *American Literature*, VIII (March, 1936), 70-71.
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Read before the American Dialect Society, meeting with the Modern Language Association, December, 1917, Harvard University.

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"The Pronunciation of 'Either' and 'Neither'." *American Speech* VII (June, 1932), 371-76.

Read before the Present-Day English Section of the Modern Language Association, December 30, 1931, University of Wisconsin.

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Read before the English Section of the Nebraska State Teachers Association at Omaha, 1922.

## R

"A Recent Theory of Ballad-Making." *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, XLIV (June, 1929), 622-30.

"Research in American English." *American Speech*, V (June, 1930), 359-65.

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- A Dictionary of Spanish Terms in English.* By Harold W. Bentley. *American Literature*, V (May, 1933), 179-81.
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- Folk-Songs from the Southern Highlands.* By Mellinger E. Henry. *Journal of American Folklore*, LV (October, 1940), 183-84.
- Folk Songs of French Canada.* By Barbeau and Sapir. *American Speech*, I (January, 1926), 244-45.
- The Folk Tale.* Edited by Stith Thompson. *Modern Language Quarterly*, VIII (September, 1947), 375-76.
- John Hardy.* By Guy B. Johnson. *Journal of American Folklore*, XLIII (January-March, 1930), 126.
- John Henry.* By Louis W. Chappell. *Journal of American Folklore*, XLVI (October-December, 1933), 421-22.
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- Life and Letters of James Whitcomb Riley.* Edited by William Lyon Phelps. *American Literature*, III (November, 1931), 380-81.
- Literarische Einflüsse in Schottischen Volksballaden.* By Gabriele Humbert. *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, XXXIII (1932), 99-101.
- Literary Study and the Scholarly Profession.* By Hardin Craig. *College English*, VII (December, 1945), 174-75.
- Minstrels of the Mine Patch.* By George Korson. *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, III (March, 1939), 59-60.
- The Missouri.* By Stanley Vestal. *California Folklore Quarterly*, V (January, 1946), 123-25.
- Names on the Land.* By George R. Stewart. *Virginia Quarterly Review*, XXI (Summer, 1945), 452-56.
- The Negro and His Songs,* by Newman I. White, and *South Carolina Ballads,* by Reed Smith. *Saturday Review of Literature*, V (October 13, 1928), 220.
- The New Green Mountain Songster.* Traditional Folk Songs of Vermont. Collected, Transcribed and Edited by Helen Hartness Flanders, Elizabeth Flanders Ballard, George Brown, and Phillips Barry. *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, IV (March, 1940), 51-52.
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- The Pepys Ballads.* Edited by Hyder E. Rollins. Vols. I, II, III. *Modern Language Notes*, XLV (November, 1930), 480-81.
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- A Song Catcher in the Southern Mountains.* By Dorothy Scarborough. *Journal of American Folklore*, LI (April-June, 1938), 210-11.

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- Speak the Speech.* By Barrett H. Clark. *American Literature*, VI (March, 1934), 351-53.
- A Survey of English Dictionaries.* By M. M. Mathews. *American Literature*, VI (March, 1934), 96-97.
- The Survival of French in the Old District of Sainte Genevieve.* By Ward Allison Dorrance. University of Missouri Studies, X. *American Literature*, VII (January, 1936), 488-89.
- Texas and Southwestern Lore.* Edited by J. Frank Dobie, *Frontier Ballads*, edited by Charles J. Finger, and *American Mountain Songs*, collected by Ethel Park Richardson. New York *Herald Tribune*, Weekly Book Review. (February 12, 1928).
- Traditional Ballads of Virginia.* Edited by Arthur Kyle Davis. *American Speech*, VI (June, 1931), 376-77.
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- White and Negro Spirituals: Their Life Span and Kinship.* By George Pullen Jackson. *American Literature*, XVI (November, 1944), 250-52.

## S

- "Salut au Monde." *Saturday Review of Literature*, XIII (December 21, 1935), 9.
- "The Safest Leaders and the Wisest Teachers." *Journal of the American Association of University Women*, XXXV (January, 1942), 73.
- Sections on Goldsmith's *The Deserted Village* and Gray's *Elegy* in *Introduction to the English Classics*. Edited by W. P. Trent, G. L. Hanson, and W. T. Brewster (1911), 230-33, 241-44.
- Semi-Centennial Book of the University of Nebraska, 1869-1919.* (1919). 144 pp.
- "The Background," "The Founding of the University," and "Organizations."
- Shakespeare's *I Henry VI*. Tudor Shakespeare Series. Edited with Introduction and Notes. (New York: Macmillan & Co., 1912, 141 pp.).
- "Sir Andrew Barton" in Nebraska." *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, III (December, 1938), 205-06.
- "Sizing Our Ballads." *American Scholar*, V (1936), 360-66.
- "Something about American Traditional Songs." Omaha *World-Herald*, Diamond Jubilee Edition (October 27, 1929).
- "Some Folk Locutions." *American Speech*, XVII (December, 1942), 247-50.
- "Some Recurrent Assimilations." *American Speech*, VI (June, 1931), 347-48.
- "Some Texts of Western Songs." *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, III (March, 1939), 25-31.
- "Sophomore." *American Speech*, V (April, 1930), 270.
- "The Southwestern Cowboy Songs and the English and Scottish Popular Ballads." *Modern Philology*, XI (October, 1913), 195-207.

"Spelling Manipulation and Present-Day Advertising." *Dialect Notes*, V (1923), 226-32.

"Strong Verbs and Preterite-Present Verbs in Anglo-Saxon." (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1898. 19 pp.).

"Student Activities." *Lyre of Alpha Chi Omega* (January, 1910).

"'Stunts' in Language." *English Journal*, IX (February, 1920), 88-95.

## T

"The Term 'Communal'." *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, XXXIX (1924), 440-54.

*Read before the English Section of the Modern Language Association, December 29, 1922, Philadelphia.*

Tennyson's *Lancelot and Elaine*. Edited with Introduction, Notes and an Appendix. American School Supply Company, 1905, 80 pp.

"Traditional Ballads in Nebraska." *Journal of American Folklore*, XXVI (October-December, 1913), 351-66.

"Two American Plow Names," ('Grasshopper Plow,' 'Noogroun Plow'). *American Speech*, XXIII (February, 1948), 72-73.

"Two Western Words" ('Fofarraw,' 'Dognition'). *American Speech*, XXII (December, 1947), 302-03.

## U

"The Undergraduate Years of Hartley Alexander." *The Prairie Schooner*, XXII (December, 1948), 372-80, University of Nebraska Press.

"The 'Uniformity' of the Ballad Style." *Modern Language Notes*, XXXV (1920), 217-22.

"Use and Abuse of the Contemporary in the Teaching of English." *School and Society*, XIII (April 9, 1921), 427-31.

*Read before the English Section of the Central Division of the Modern Language Association, December 29, 1920, Chicago.*

## V

"The Value of English Linguistics to the Teacher." *American Speech*, I (November 19, 1925), 101-06.

*Read before the College Section of the National Council of Teachers of English, St. Louis, 1924.*

## W

"Walt Whitman and Bird Poetry." *English Journal*, XIX (January, 1930), 31-36.

"Walt Whitman and the French Language." *American Speech*, I (May, 1926), 421-30.

"Walt Whitman and Italian Music." *American Mercury*, VI (September, 1925), 58-63.

*Program of Modern Language Association, Columbia University, December 31, 1924. Questions older beliefs in the indebtedness of Whitman's poetic*

*style to Blake, Ossian, Oriental poetry, Browning, Carlyle, etc., and examines his own testimony.*

"Walt Whitman's Neologisms." *American Mercury*, IV (February, 1925), 199-201.

*Whitman's Specimen Days, Democratic Vistas, and Other Prose.* (New York: Doubleday, Doran and Co., 1935, 370 pp.)

"What Should Be Expected of the Teacher of English?" *English Journal*, X (April, 1921), 179-86.

"Whipping the Cat." *American Speech*, IV (June, 1929), 352-54.

"Word-Coinage and Modern Trade-Names." *Dialect Notes*, IV (1913), 29-41.

## PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES, ACTIVITIES AND HONORS

### MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

*Vice-President and member of the executive committee, 1916; member of the executive committee again, 1921-1923; vice-president again, 1925-26. Chairman Comparative Literature group (Popular Literature), 1923, 1924, 1927; chairman Present-Day English group, 1934; member Advisory Council, American Literature group, 1942; chairman American Literature group, 1944; member nominating committee MLA officers, 1919; member nominating committee Old English group, 1935; member nominating committee Popular Literature Group, 1935, 1936, 1937; chairman, resolutions committee, 1948.*

### SOUTH-CENTRAL MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION

#### AMERICAN DIALECT SOCIETY

*Western vice-president and member executive committee, 1921-25; national vice-president, 1927-37; member executive committee, 1928-45; chairman for meeting with MLA, 1923; national president, 1938-44; member nominating committee, 1945; member of committee on Dialect Dictionary, 1946-.*

### LINGUISTIC SOCIETY OF AMERICA

*Foundation member, 1924; national vice-president, 1939.*

### AMERICAN FOLKLORE SOCIETY

*National President, 1925-27; member national council since 1928.*

### HUMANISTIC RESEARCH ASSOCIATION OF ENGLAND

*Foundation member; member executive committee American Branch, 1925.*

### NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

*Director, 1915-19; national treasurer, 1917; honorary life member Nebraska Council, 1944.*

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS

*Charter member, 1914; member national council, 1931, 1932; national vice-president, 1936, 1937; member national committee W, on Women in College and University Faculties, 1921; Committee E, on Required Courses in Education, 1932; Committee O, on Organization and Conduct of Local Chapters, 1934; nominating committee, 1941; secretary local chapter, 1916.*

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN, FORMERLY ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGIATE ALUMNAE

*Nebraska director, 1906-08; member national council of ACA, 1913; member fellowship award committee of AAUW, 1935-37; national vice-president, 1937-44.*

AMERICAN DELEGATE TO THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF ENGLISH, LONDON, 1927.

SPECIAL INVITATION TO TAKE PART, AS AN AMERICAN DELEGATE, IN THE CELEBRATION OF THE 500TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HEIDELBERG AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE HELD THERE, 1936.

MEDIAEVAL ACADEMY OF AMERICA

*Member, 1925-45.*

TEXAS FOLKLORE SOCIETY

*Honorary life member, 1924.*

SPELLING REFORM ASSOCIATION

*Vice-president, 1938 and later.*

JOHN SIMON GUGGENHEIM FOUNDATION

*Member advisory council, 1928-32.*

NATIONAL FOLK FESTIVAL

*Member Executive council since 1935.*

NEBRASKA STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

*Chairman Literature Section, 1916.*

NEBRASKA ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

*Chairman Folklore and Ethnology Section, 1917, 1918.*

PHI BETA KAPPA

*Corresponding secretary Nebraska Alpha chapter, 1898-1905; vice-president 1911-12, 1926-27; president 1915-16, 1916-17, 1936-37.*

NEBRASKA WRITERS GUILD

*Foundation member, 1925.*

AWARDED NEBRASKA KIWANIS MEDAL FOR DISTINGUISHED SERVICE, 1947.

AWARDED NEBRASKA UNIVERSITY ALUMNI MEDAL FOR DISTINGUISHED SERVICE, 1948.



## LEXICOGRAPHICAL

Member of consultants in pronunciation for *Webster's New International Dictionary*, Unabridged, 1935; member editorial and pronunciation committees *Thorndike-Century Senior Dictionary*, 1941; also *Thorndike-Century Junior Dictionary*, 1942; and *Thorndike-Century Beginning Dictionary*, 1945; informant *Kenyon-Knott Pronouncing Dictionary of American English*, 1944; Advisory Board *German-American Dictionary*, Frederick Ungar (in preparation).

## EDITORIAL

A founder and senior editor of *American Speech*, 1925-33; associate and department editor, since 1934; member advisory board, *New England Quarterly*, 1928-30; *Folksay*, 1929; *American Literature*, nearly continuously, 1929-46; *College English* (elected by subscribers), 1930-46; *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, since 1939; *Bulletin of the American Association of University Professors*, since 1941; senior editor of *University of Nebraska Studies in Language and Criticism*, 1917-40.

## WAR SERVICE

Member of Women's Committee of State Council of Defense, 1918. Acting State Head of National League for Women's Service, 1918; Chairman of its Overseas Relief activities; member of Food for France Committee. Chairman of committee sending \$1,000 of soap to French peasants at the suggestion of Dorothy Canfield Fisher, 1918.

## SPORTS

TENNIS: Did not enter many events; played occasionally when present near locality where events took place. Local women's singles, 1890; women's state champion, 1891, 1892; university champion in men's (*sic*) singles and doubles, 1891; second place in men's intercollegiate singles; winner (with Charles Foster Kent) of Wayne County, New York, men's doubles, 1894; winner women's western championship in singles, Chicago 1897, defeating national champion, Canadian and other champions to do so; Chicago city champion, 1897; women's singles and doubles, Heidelberg, Germany, 1899, 1900; director Nebraska tennis association, 1911-13; Lincoln city championship (with Guy Williams) in men's doubles, 1913; central western championship in women's doubles (with Carrie Neely), 1915; also western women's doubles (with Miss Neely), 1915; played by invitation in several men's Nebraska state tournaments, exiting to the winners in each instance. President, Lincoln tennis association, 1919.

CYCLING: Winner of Century Road Club bars for riding a hundred miles in a day, 1895, 1896; winner of Rambler gold medal for riding 5,000 miles, 1896.

GOLF: Ranking local woman golfer, 1901-1927, winning championship whenever entered; first city championship, 1926; state golf champion, 1916; vice-president women's golf association of Nebraska, 1916-17.

Other sports: Ranking figure skater; introducer (with Verna Edgren) of ski in Lancaster County, Nebraska; amateur coach of winning basket ball teams at the University of Nebraska in intercollegiate and other matches, 1897-1907; some experience with swimming, riding, bowling.

# SOCIAL AND SOCIAL-PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Member of Daughters of the American Revolution (patriotic); Phi Beta Kappa (scholastic); Kappa Kappa Gamma (social); Theta Sigma Phi (journalistic); Chi Delta Phi (literary); Sigma Tau Delta (literary); Delta Omicron (musical); Alpha Lambda Delta (scholastic); Delta Kappa Gamma (educational); Pi Gamma Mu (sociological); Mortar Board; Lincoln Country Club; Lincoln University Club; Copper Kettle Club (social-literary); Wooden Spoon (social-professional); honorary member Omaha Press Club.

## VITA

Born June 30, 1872, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Taught at home. Entered University of Nebraska's two-year Latin School by examination, 1886.

B.L. and diploma in music (piano), University of Nebraska, 1892; A.M., 1895.

Attended summer session, University of Chicago, 1897, 1898.

Entered University of Heidelberg, Germany, autumn of 1899. Ph.D., Heidelberg, June, 1900.

Honorary Litt.D., Smith College, 1928.

Assistant, Department of English, University of Nebraska, 1893.

Assistant instructor, 1894-97.

Instructor, University of Nebraska, 1897-99.

Adjunct Professor, 1900-06.

Assistant Professor, 1906-08.

Associate Professor, 1908-12.

Professor. 1912-45.

Visiting Professor, summer session, University of California, Berkeley, 1923.

Professor, Linguistic Institute at Yale, summer, 1928.

Visiting Professor, University of Chicago, summer, 1929.

Visiting Professor, Columbia University, summer, 1930.

Visiting Professor, Stanford University, 1931.

Other invitations for visiting professorships, for the year or for summer sessions, not accepted.



